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# *A matrimonial advertisement*

Egbert Willard Fowler

DAL 1582.4.70

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**(CLASS OF 1876)**

**DECEMBER 3, 1920**





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**BAKER'S EDITION  
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**A Matrimonial Ad-  
vertisement**

**Price, 15 Cents**



**WALTER H. BAKER & CO.  
BOSTON**

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**THE AMAZONS** Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, not difficult. Plays a full evening.

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**No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts**

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A

# MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT

A Comedietta in One Act

BY  
EGBERT W. FOWLER

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BOSTON

Walter H. Babcock Co.



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## CHARACTERS.

**HARRY ANDREWS**, *aged twenty-one.*

**KITTIE GREY**, *aged eighteen.*

**SCENE.** — *The parlor of a hotel.*

**COSTUMES.** — *Modern and appropriate.*

## PROPERTIES.

Two newspapers. Two bundles of notes, — one pink, one blue. Fan tied with pink ribbon, and bonnet trimmed with blue, for Kitty. Clock on mantel.



**COPYRIGHT, 1893, BY WALTER H. BAKER & Co.**

# A MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT.

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SCENE. — *Parlor of a hotel. Chair and table, L. Settee at R. Door, C. Newspaper on table, L., and also on settee.*

(*Enter HARRY ANDREWS hastily.*)

HARRY. Gracious! What a run of it! And if I had missed the 3.15 train I should have been an hour late. As it is, I am afraid she has come, and, not finding me here, has gone away again. Four o'clock. No, I am on time. It's astonishing how very nervous I am. Yet, it's no wonder. A man doesn't have an appointment with a lady who is a perfect stranger to him every day in the week, and especially on such delicate business. Who could have imagined a week ago, when Kittie and I were so happy in our first love and engagement, that to-day I should be in this parlor, waiting to make arrangements relating to matrimony with an unknown female whom I have never seen, and whose full name I do not know. Well, it's all Kittie's fault; and if she loses me forever, she can only blame herself. Imagine my feelings on last Thursday evening. As I was standing in the shadow of the large tree before her father's house, preparing to serenade her, and just as I was opening my mouth to sing, —

"Love, I will trust thee ever,"

who should come to the door but Kittie, accompanied by a strange man — a man whom I never saw before. I saw her bid him an affectionate adieu — actually kiss him, and heard him say, "Good-by, dearie; don't expect a letter from me before Saturday, pet." Pet! After he left, with a heart bursting with emotion, I rushed into her presence, and demanded an explanation, which was refused, and my sufferings laughed at. Kittie even reproached me for what she called my "insane jealousy," and gave me back my ring. I calmly returned the hat mark she gave me at Christmas, and left the house, fully resolved to do something desperate. Passing the office of the *Times*, a happy thought struck me — I entered and inserted a matrimonial advertisement. The next day I received an answer, signed "Catherine H. 2., *Times*." Since then I have written

and received seven letters from the fair unknown, who has also received a blow to her affections, and who always writes on pink note-paper. I have asked for an interview, which she has granted. Let me read her note again.

MR H. 24., *Times*, — I will meet you at the place you mentioned at 4 o'clock and 15 minutes. That you may be able to distinguish me, I will wear a bonnet trimmed with blue, and carry a fan tied with pink ribbon; and you may, when you see me, show me this note, written on pink paper.

Yours, as ever,

CATHERINE, H. 2., *Times*.

Even after receiving this note, if Kittie had been at all friendly, I should have tried to make it up with her. But to-day when I passed her father's house, and saw her standing at the window, she returned my bow with a frigid look, as if I was an entire stranger, and actually turned up her nose at me. So I tear her image from my heart, and place in the vacant spot that of Catherine H. 2., *Times*. (*Looks at watch*.) Gracious! It's time she was here. Hark! There's some one coming now! I'll just run out until I see who it is. (*Exit R.*)

(*Enter KITTIE, C. She has an umbrella in her hand, and appears as if she had been in a shower.*)

KITTIE. I wonder if anybody saw me come in. I do wish I had refused to come. If it had not commenced to rain just before I got to the door, I should have gone on without coming in; but now I must wait until the shower is over. Oh, I will pay Mr. Harry Andrews for his absurd jealousy! To do that, I would meet anybody. As if he had the right to dictate to me now! A pretty life I should lead after we were married! I wonder how I will know the unknown when he comes. Let me see. He will carry the pink notes, and — pshaw! I shall know him anyway as soon as I see him, for he says he has been crossed in love, and there will be an affinity between us that needs no outside mark of recognition. My! there's some one coming! What shall I do! Oh, over here — (*Sits on sofa, R., and holds newspaper before her face in such a way as to hide it from HARRY, who enters at C.*)

HARRY (*who sees KITTIE on sofa*). By Jove, she's here! Now, shall I begin the conversation at once, or shall I wait for her to recognize me?

KITTIE (*aside*). Gracious me! There is the man! I wish I was at home.

HARRY (*coughing loudly*). Ahem!

KITTIE (*aside*). The bold person! He wants to attract my attention, but he shall not see my face if I can help it. (*Holds newspaper closer before her face.*)

HARRY. Why in the Dickens don't she speak? and what makes her hold that paper so I can't see her face? Maybe it isn't her.

(KITTIE's fan, tied with pink bow, falls to the floor.) No, there's the fan! (KITTIE stoops to pick up the fan, and in doing so the blue bonnet shows above the edge of the paper), and the blue bonnet! Yes, Catherine — it must be Catherine — but why don't she show herself and recognize me? Ahem!

KITTIE (*aside*). The impudent thing! He'll speak next. I wish I knew what he looks like.

HARRY (*aside*). Great Cæsar! Maybe she's one of those black-mailing creatures, and is making a sketch of my face, which, together with my letters, would be just what she would want for a breach-of-promise case; but two can play at the same game, miss. (*Sits L., and holds up paper exactly in the same position as KITTIE has hers.*)

KITTIE. I am dying to see what he is like. I wonder what he is doing now. I'll see. (*Looks over top of paper.*)

HARRY. I wonder what she is up to now. I'll just take a peep. (*They both look over top of paper, and immediately drop their heads.*)

KITTIE (*aside*). My goodness! I wonder if he saw me.

HARRY (*aside*). I was right. It's lucky I caught on to her game in time.

KITTIE (*aside*). I wish I was at home. I wonder if I could get out without his seeing my face. But how — yes, I have it! (*Tears a little hole in centre of paper, and starts toward C. door.*)

HARRY. She's got her evidence, and is going away — but not if I can help it. (*He starts up and closes the door.*)

KITTIE. Oh! (*Reseats herself on sofa.*) What shall I do! He's determined not to let me go until he sees who I am.

HARRY. This is ridiculous. We can't sit here like this all day. Maybe, after all, she only wants me to break the ice. (*Aloud to*

KITTIE.) Pleasant day, miss.

KITTIE. Yes; quite pleasant, indeed.

HARRY. Quite warm; don't you think so?

KITTIE. Yes; quite warm.

HARRY. Nice little shower we are having.

KITTIE. 'Most too wet for comfort.

HARRY. You think so?

KITTIE. Yes; it nearly always is wet when it rains.

HARRY (*after a pause*). Yes; especially when it rains as hard as it does now. Since it seems we will be obliged to stay here together until the rain ceases, allow me to present you my card. (*Aside.*) My Cousin Dick's. (*He gives her the card, and takes the paper from before his face.*)

KITTIE. Mr. Richard White! Harry's Cousin Dick! How fortunate! I need not be afraid any longer. (*Lowers paper from her face.*)

HARRY } (*together.*) } By Jove, it's Kittie!

KITTIE } } Harry, as I live!

(*They look at each other in amazement.*)

HARRY (*aside*). Kittie! What if she should discover my reason for being here!

KITTIE. If Harry should find out that I am here to meet an unknown gentleman, I am lost.

HARRY (*coldly*). Good-afternoon, Miss Grey.

KITTIE (*very dignified*). Mr. Andrews, I am really surprised to see you.

HARRY. Pleasant day.

KITTIE. Yes; I have been out walking and — (*aside*) what a lovely excuse for my being here! — there came up a rain, so I stopped in here.

HARRY. About three miles from where you live. Do you often walk this far from home?

KITTIE (*aside*). He suspects something. (*Aloud.*) Yes, quite often; that is, my dressmaker lives in this neighborhood, and I called to have a dress fitted, and — the day was so warm that I just stepped into — (*Voice outside*: “*This way, please; the party is waiting in here.*”)

KITTIE (*aside*). Good heavens! my unknown! I am lost! He is sure to recognize me, and what will Harry think!

HARRY (*aside*). The dickens! There comes Catherine H. 2., *Times*, and she will find me here with Kittie, and Kittie will find I have arranged a meeting with Catherine H. 2., — O Lord, what shall I do?

(*Both walk up stage and down front again excitedly.*)

KITTIE (*aside*). I must pretend to know Harry, and be on loving terms with him. Then, when we are alone again, I can explain.

HARRY (*aside*). If she comes in, I can pretend that Kitty is my sweetheart, and that I am here to meet no one. (*Going over to Kittie.*) Ah, quite a pretty fan you carry, Miss Grey.

KITTIE (*startled; aside*). He notices my fan and the pink ribbon. He must suspect something. I must deceive him. (*Aloud.*) Hem! “Miss Grey!” Is that the way you speak to one you know as well as you do me — Harry?

HARRY (*aside*). She wants to make up with me. I’ll accomplish a double stroke, — deceive the unknown, and make it up with Kittie. I — ah — beg pardon, Miss — Kittie — but I was not sure that you would allow me — to — that is — after — the —

KITTIE. O Harry, I hope that you will not allude to our little quarrel. Such little tiffs as that are quite the thing among people who are — that is — I mean —

HARRY (*aside*). She certainly does want to make it up. (*Sits beside her.*) Engaged. Yes, Kittie — (*He takes her fan. Both embarrassed.*) What a pretty pink ribbon!

KITTIE (*aside*). He knows it all. (*Aloud.*) Ha! ha! That is not pink; it’s blue, a pale blue!

HARRY. No — why I should say your bonnet was trimmed with blue.

KITTIE (*aside*). How can he be so cruel! No, no; my bonnet is trimmed with pink, and (*pointing to fan*) this is blue, and this (*pointing to bonnet*) is pink.

HARRY. You don't say!

KITTIE (*aside*). Oh, I know if he keeps on I will have to confess all, and what will he think of me!

HARRY (*aside*). How strangely Kittie is acting! Can it be possible she knows why I am here? (*Takes pink letter from his pocket and places it beside the fan. Aloud.*) And what color would you call this, Miss Kittie?

KITTIE (*gasping, aside*). My letter! He does know all. (*Wildly, aloud.*) Why, it's blue, a pale blue. Why, I am sure it's blue! (*Aside.*) My letter! how did he get it!

HARRY. But it isn't the same color as your bonnet! See! It doesn't match at all.

KITTIE (*aside*). I'm desperate. I must make him think he is color-blind. (*Takes HARRY'S bundle of blue letters from her pocketbook and lays it by the pink ribbon.*) See! This is pink.

HARRY (*aside*). My letters! I am trapped! It's all up with me! I must agree to all she says. Yes, that is pink and this is blue — pink — blue — pink — blue — (*Aside.*) Oh, if I could only get those letters!

KITTIE (*aside*). If, in some way, I could get those letters, I would defy him. (*Aloud.*) What a pretty color for note-paper!

HARRY (*looking at notes which KITTIE holds*). Yes, beautiful (*Aside.*) Oh, if I could only get them back!

KITTIE. Might I examine it?

HARRY. Yes, of course. (*Aside.*) Then she'll have them both. No, I must get mine first. (*Aloud.*) On second thought, it would be betraying confidence. It does not belong to me.

KITTIE. No, I did not suppose that you would use paper of that color. It looks more like that a lady would choose. (*Aside.*) If he accuses me, I'll pretend ignorance of the whole affair. (*Aloud.*) It's the same with the bundle of blue notes, they belong to somebody else.

HARRY. These I have were written to — to — Cousin Dick —

KITTIE (*aside*). Then I have been writing to Cousin Dick, eh? (*Aloud.*) And these were written to — to — our cook —

HARRY (*aside*). Good heavens! I have been corresponding with a cook.

KITTIE. Suppose we exchange confidences. I am really here on an errand for Martha, our cook, who has been carrying on a correspondence with a gentleman whom she did not know, and whom she was to meet here to-day; but her mother was suddenly taken ill, and, as a dutiful child should, she went to her bedside, making me promise to come here and tell the unknown that everything was postponed until Saturday the same hour.

HARRY. You don't say!

KITTIE. Do you doubt my word? (*Aside.*) O Kittie Grey, this will bar you from the promised happiness to come.

HARRY. How kind you are. But I say! it's quite a joke on Cousin Dick, you know.

KITTIE. Yes; his writing to a cook.

HARRY. Yes; I told him it must be some low creature. You can always tell the real character of a person by her handwriting, you know.

KITTIE (*slowly*). Yes.

HARRY. So when Cousin Dick asked me to come to-day in his place, I told him it would be to meet some intriguing widow, or second-rate servant-girl.

KITTIE. What a judge of character you are!

HARRY. Oh, yes; I've made a great study of it.

KITTIE. But in spite of all, I suppose you were quite anxious to meet this unknown. I can imagine how you thought you would make love to this intriguing widow. Oh, you are very constant in your affections, Mr. Andrews!

HARRY. It's all very well for you to talk of constancy and all that — I, who have had proofs before of your fickle nature —

KITTIE. What do you mean, sir? I am sure I have done nothing.

HARRY. Kissing strange men on doorsteps is what you call nothing, I suppose. You can't deny that.

KITTIE. I can. But I won't.

HARRY. Then you confess —

KITTIE. Yes; to kissing my brother Ned, whom you have never met.

HARRY. Your brother — O Kittie, why didn't you tell me so before? I'll never be jealous again.

KITTIE. Never, Harry?

HARRY. Never!

KITTIE. True as you live?

HARRY. True as I live!

KITTIE. Then give me back my ring.

HARRY (*placing the ring on her finger*). And now we are engaged all over again. (*Solemnly.*) But I tell you what, Kittie, you came near losing me.

KITTIE. How so?

HARRY. I was going to propose to your cook.

KITTIE. Harry Andrews! then it was you who received those letters I wrote?

HARRY. And you who wrote those letters I received?

KITTIE. O Harry — (*Bursts out laughing.*)

HARRY. O Kittie — you — Oh, I shall die — (*Both laugh heartily.*)

KITTIE. And I came here to meet you, and you to meet me!

HARRY. And I was mad at you.

KITTIE. And I was mad at you.

HARRY. I did it just for spite.

KITTIE. So did I.

HARRY. And we've made it all up, and we're never going to quarrel again.

KITTIE. Never! For fear we might not be so lucky in our next experience with —

HARRY. A Matrimonial Advertisement.

CURTAIN.





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## New Plays

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### THE SISTERHOOD OF BRIDGET

A Farce in Three Acts

*By Robert Elwin Ford*

Seven males, six females. Costumes modern; scenery, easy interiors. Plays two hours. An easy, effective and very humorous piece turning upon the always interesting servant-girl question. A very unusual number of comedy parts; all the parts good. Easy to get up and well recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

#### CHARACTERS

EDWARD MASON, <i>a wealthy stock-broker.</i>	MRS. MASON, <i>socialist and aesthete.</i>
LORD CURTON, <i>in search of a wife with money.</i>	ELEANOR MASON, <i>her daughter.</i>
WARD LEIGHTON, <i>lieutenant of the 176th Regiment.</i>	BRIDGET, <i>the cook.</i>
MIKE MCSHANE, <i>driver of a milk-cart.</i>	JOSIE RILEY, } <i>housemaids.</i>
	EMMA HONE, }
JIMMY MACRAE, <i>page at Mr. Mason's.</i>	MARY MACRAE, <i>Jimmy's sister.</i>
	TIMOTHY ROUKE, <i>house painter.</i>
	WILLIAM, <i>butler at Mr. Mason's.</i>

### THE ALL-AMERICA ELEVEN

*By M. N. Beebe*

Twelve males. Costumes modern; scenery unnecessary. Plays fifteen minutes. An up-to-date and popular entertainment for boys in one scene, sure to please both the boys and the audience. Characters: Football Boy, Baseball Boy, Tennis Boy, Office Boy, Messenger Boy, Country Boy, Chinese Boy, Jewish Boy, Irish Boy, Indian Boy, Negro Boy and Trainer.

*Price, 15 cents*

### TAKING THE THIRD DEGREE IN THE GRANGE

*By A. C. Daniels*

Seventeen males. Costumes eccentric; scenery unnecessary. Plays ten minutes. A burlesque initiation in one act, especially adapted for a Grange entertainment. Very simple, very clean and wholly lacking in horse-play and acrobatics. Well suited for its purpose.

*Price, 15 cents*

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# Novelties

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## SCENES IN A RESTAURANT

An Entertainment in One Act

By *Jessie A. Kelley*

*Author of "Our Church Fair," "The Village Post-Office,"  
"Miss Prim's Kindergarten," etc.*

Fifteen males, ten females. Costumes modern; scenery unimportant. Plays one hour. A humorous presentation of what happens every day in the average restaurant, hitting everybody right where they live. Sure to be popular. All parts good; lots of incident and chances for local hits. Can be recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

### CHARACTERS

Mr. Jones, *head waiter.*  
Jennie } *waitresses.*  
Mary }  
Mr. Rice, *a mean man.*  
Mr. Foss, *who has a plan.*  
Mrs. Brett.  
Mrs. Dacey.  
Mrs. Slack, *deaf, middle-aged, and stout.*  
Miss Drew.  
Mr. Rich } *actors.*  
Mr. Jackson }  
Reuben Grass, *from the country.*  
Mandy Clover, *his best girl.*

Mrs. Smiley, *an indulgent mother.*  
Maud, *her daughter; a spoiled child.*  
Beggar.  
Mr. Delaney } *drummers.*  
Mr. Hazelton }  
Mr. Hall, *a health crank.*  
James, *his servant.*  
Mr. Monroe, *a chronic nicker.*  
Hiram Greenback, *from way back.*  
Mary Ann, *his wife.*  
Mr. Casey } *right from Ireland.*  
Mr. Mahoney }

## FUN IN A THEATRICAL OFFICE

A Vaudeville Entertainment

By *Maravene Kennedy Thompson*

Seven males, sixteen females. Costumes modern; scenery unimportant. Plays a full evening. A complete vaudeville entertainment in itself or can be used as the frame for other specialties; a "go-as-you-please" show, very elastic and adaptable to all places and circumstances. A big hit in its original performance. Strongly recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

### CHARACTERS

Luke Loud, *a theatrical agent.*  
Bat, *his office boy.*  
Clara Vere De Vere, *his stenographer.*  
Orchestra Carr, *his pianist.*

### VAUDEVILLE ARTISTS

#### Gentlemen

Pietro De Bianco.  
George Washington Lincoln.  
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#### Ladies

Mrs. Susan Suffreno Riser.  
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Miss Anise Elderbloom.  
Frisky Dewdrop.  
Fluffy Flutter.  
Madame Sylva.  
Mrs. Bridget Casey.  
Mrs. Rulethe Roost.  
Two ladies *for sketch introduced.*  
Mme. Carmencita.  
"Peach" Ott.  
Ruby Ott.  
Goldie } *the Coquette Sisters.*  
Birdie }  
Queenie }

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# New Plays for Female Characters

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## LUCIA'S LOVER

A Farce in Three Acts

*By Bertha Currier Porter*

Eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays an hour and a half. A bright and graceful piece, light in character, but sympathetic and amusing. Six contrasted types of girls at boarding-school are shown in a novel story. Lots of fun, but very refined. Easy to produce and can be strongly recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

## A GIRL IN A THOUSAND

A Comedy in Four Acts

*By Evelyn Gray Whiting*

Fourteen females. Costumes, modern; scenes, three interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening. Very strong and sympathetic and of varied interest. Irish comedy; strong "witch" character; two very lively "kids"; all the parts good. Effective, easy to produce, and can be strongly recommended to young people as thoroughly wholesome in tone as well as amusing.

*Price, 25 cents*

## A VIRGINIA HEROINE

A Comedy in Three Acts

*By Susie G. McGlone*

Eleven female characters. Scenery, easy; costumes, modern. Plays one hour and forty-five minutes. Irish and negro comedy parts, and two character parts; most of the characters young. A very easy and interesting play for girls, well suited for school performance. Romantic interest with lots of comedy.

*Price, 25 cents*

## HOW THE STORY GREW

An Entertainment for Women's Clubs, in One Act

*By O. W. Gleason*

Eight female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant; may be given on a platform without any. Plays forty-five minutes. A very easy and amusing little piece, full of human nature and hitting off a well-known peculiarity of almost any community. Written for middle-aged women, and a sure hit with the audience.

*Price, 15 cents*

*Sent, post-paid, on receipt of price, by*

**BAKER, 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.**

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## New Entertainments

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### OUR CHURCH FAIR A Farcical Entertainment in Two Acts

*By Jessie A. Kelley*

Twelve females. Costumes modern; scenery unimportant. Plays an hour and a quarter. A humorous picture of the planning of the annual church fair by the ladies of the sewing circle. Full of local hits and general human nature, and a sure laugh-producer in any community. Can be recommended.

*Price, 25 cents*

#### CHARACTERS

Mrs. ROBERTS, *who wants to be president.*

Mrs. HENRY, *young, giddy, fond of novels.*

Mrs. JACKSON, *the president of the society.*

Mrs. BRETT, *on the dinner committee.*

Mrs. LEWIS, *the minister's wife.*

Mrs. LAWSON, *plump.*

Mrs. BROWN, *anxious to get new church attendants.*

Mrs. ADDISON, *very inquisitive.*

Mrs. RIDGELY, *sensitive.*

Mrs. OTIS, *on the dinner committee.*

Mrs. THOMPSON, *decidedly class.*

Mrs. DREW, *just married.*

### THE RIVAL CHOIRS

#### An Entertainment in One Scene

*By Sherman F. Johnson*

Seven males, four females. Costumes eccentric; scenery unimportant. Plays one hour. A novelty in musical entertainments, introducing the old choir and the new in competition. A novel setting for a concert, offering an interesting contrast between the old music and the new. Lots of incidental fun, character and human nature. Sure to please. Originally produced in Meriden, Conn.

*Price, 25 cents*

### A THIEF IN THE HOUSE

#### A Comedy in One Act

*By R. M. Robinson*

Six males, one playing a female character (colored). Costumes modern, scenery, an interior. Plays forty-five minutes. A first-class play for male characters only, of strong dramatic interest with plenty of comedy. A play that can be recommended, in spite of its lack of female characters, to any audience.

*Price, 25 cents*

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## New Plays

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### THE TWIG OF THORN

An Irish Fairy Play in Two Acts

*By Marie Josephine Warren*

*Author of "The Elopement of Ellen," "Tommy's Wife," "Endymion," etc.*

Six males, seven females. Costumes, Irish peasant; scene, an interior. Plays an hour and a half. A little play of strong dramatic interest and quite exceptional charm of style and imaginative power, ideally suited for school performance. A close and accurate study of Irish folk-lore in the manner of Yeats, closely rivaling him in truth of atmosphere and in poetic quality. Highly recommended both as drama and as literature.

*Price, in cloth binding, 50 cents*

### THE SENTIMENTAL SARAHS

A Farce-Comedy in Three Acts

*By Harold Hale*

*Author of "The Best Man," "A Tax on Bachelors," "The Blundering Mr. Brown," "The People's Money," etc.*

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HARRY BRENTWORTH, Arthur's friend.

REGINALD DUDLEY, an Englishman.

JIM BUCKNER, known as "The Parson."

CONRAD MELZER, a plumber.

ELIZA WILTON, Ira's better-half.

GRACE SEWALL, wife of Arthur.

LAURA WILTON, daughter of Ira.

LENA, a German maid.

### SYNOPSIS

ACT I. — The Drawing Room of the Sewall Residence, New York City.  
"In Times of Peace Prepare for War."

ACT II. — The same. "Off to the Front."

ACT III. — Still the same. "Behold the Conquering Heroes Come."

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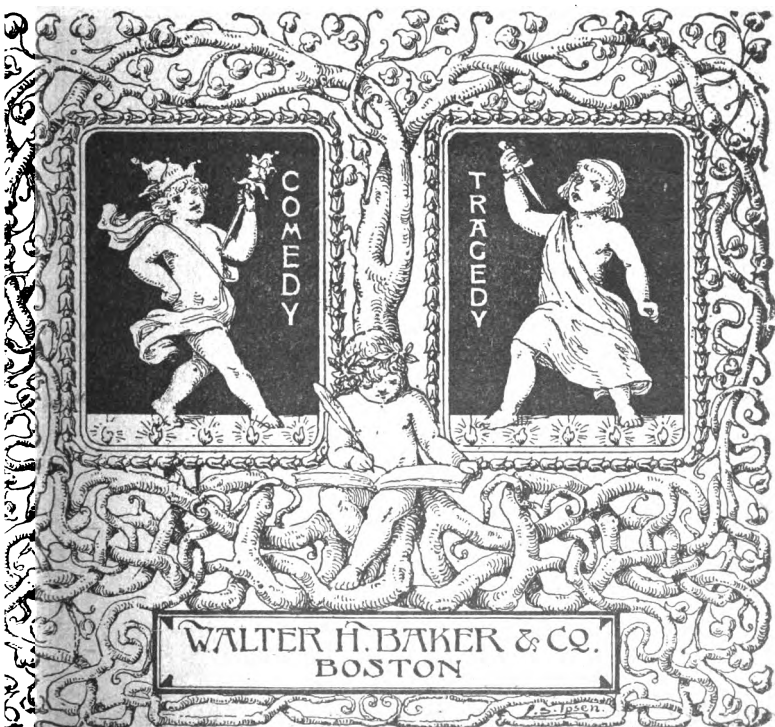
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# "OUR JIM"

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

EGBERT W. FOWLER

AUTHOR OF "A MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT"

---

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.



## "OUR JIM."

### CHARACTERS.

JOHN MATHEWS, *called "Uncle John" by all his friends*  
JAMES MATHEWS, *his son.*

BOB, *his nephew.*

MAJOR TIMOTHY MUDGE.

DEACON HEZEKIAH TIDD.

BILL TIDD,

JOHN HENRY TIDD, } *his sons.*

AUNT DEBORAH MATHEWS.

CAROLINE ANTWERP.

BESSIE, *the Major's daughter.*

GRACE ANTWERP.

SCENE.—A farm-house near Lexington, Ohio.

TIME.—1861, just preceding the Civil War.



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### SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.—"My country, 'tis of thee."

ACT II.—"The girl I left behind me."

ACT III.—"From Atlanta to the sea."

ACT IV.—"When Johnny comes marching home."



# "OUR JIM."

## ACT I.

**Scene.**—*The interior of a country barn. Open doors at back, showing meadows in the distance. Two stalls at L. with harness and saddles hanging upon the pegs. Rope tied to stall, the end lying across the stage. Hay scattered about. Bench and three-legged stool down at L. At R. a loft built about ten feet above stage, with a ladder down to C. Music at curtain.*

AUNT DEBORAH discovered at the foot of the ladder.

**Aunt D.** (*calling to BOB in the loft above*). Bob! that speckled Plymouth Rock hen lays over there to the right under the eaves. (*She crosses to bench and sits fanning herself with her sun-bonnet.*) Laws-a-me, it do beat all how she manages to git up there. It allers did appear to me that hens wuz the contrariest things alive. (*Calls.*) Can ye find 'em, Bob?

**Bob** (*appearing at the top of the ladder with his hat full of eggs*). Yep!

**Aunt D.** Then hurry down, fer I've got to get back to my cake. (*BOB starts down the ladder.*) Be careful and don't break any. Hurry up, fer I've got all the tables to set before the company comes. Yer Uncle John has invited all the neighbors in to a farewell dinner to Jimmy before he leaves with his regiment.

**Bob.** I wisht I' wuz goin' along!

[*He helps AUNT DEBORAH put the eggs into a basket.*]

**Annt D.** Where is yer Uncle John?

**Bob.** Him and Jimmy's up to the house talkin'.

**Aunt D.** You'd better put things to rights here, Bob, fer I know the young folks will want to have a reel or a piller dance or something of the kind.

**Bob.** Ye kin just bet we will!

**Aunt D.** Now, Bob, if you promise to behave yerself to-day, I'll give you the batter that is left in the cake crock.

**Bob.** I'm a-goin' to behave.

**Aunt D.** Honest now, Bob?

**Bob.** I'll cross my heart and body!

**Aunt D.** Now don't fergit. Hurry up an' fix things here, an' then come to the kitchen. I'm a-goin' to give you a hot turn-over in the bargain.

**Bob.** Aunt Debby, you're a peach! (*She starts for the door C. BOB picks up the end of the rope and runs before her. She trips and falls.*) Jeminy Christmas, I'll catch it now!

[*He runs up the ladder.*]

**Aunt D.** Bob Mathews, you did that a purpose! (*Gets up.*) Come right down here now, I'll teach you to trip me up.

**Bob.** I didn't do it on purpose, Aunt Debby; I'll swear to goodness that it was an accident.

**Aunt D.** I'll teach you to be more careful in the future. Come down, Bob.

**Bob.** That's what Davy Crockett said to the coon.

**Aunt D.** Come down, I say!

**Bob.** Thank you, Aunt Debby, but I'm very comfortable where I am.

**Aunt D.** Bob Mathews, come right down here! You deserve a good thrashin'. Them eggs are all broke, an' Caroline Antwerp comin' to dinner. She's just sure to brag up her cookin' higher 'an mine. Come here, Bob!

**Bob.** No, I'll be d—— hanged if I do!

**Aunt D.** Ye won't come down?

**Bob.** No!

**Aunt D.** Then I'll come up after you.

[*She starts up the ladder, BOB runs back into the loft. When she gets up he slides down one of the supports and takes away the ladder.*]

**Bob.** Now, Aunt Debby, you'll have to jump.

**Enter** UNCLE JOHN at C,

**Uncle J.** What's all this?

**Aunt D.** Why, he——

**Bob.** Why, she——

**Aunt D.** Bob's been aggravatin' the life outen me.

**Bob.** She wanted to thrash me 'cause I tripped her up.

**Uncle J.** Bob, you be quiet an' let yer Aunt Debby speak.

**Aunt D.** I want to get down:

**Bob.** Well, jump down then.

**Uncle J.** Put up the ladder, Robert.

[*BOB replaces the ladder, and AUNT DEBBY descends, speaking as she comes.*]

**Aunt D.** He went and tripped me up with a rope, an' smashed all my eggs, an' my cakes are in the oven burnin', an' that spiteful Caroline Antwerp here to dinner, an' not an egg to make a custard pie. (*Reaches stage.*) An' Bob swore!

**Bob.** I know a darn sight better. I only said I'd be hanged if I did.

**Uncle J.** (*reprovingly*). Robert!

**Aunt D.** An' he got me up there, then took away the ladder. I just know my cakes are burned an' everything gone wrong, an' not an egg to make a custard pie.

**Bob.** An' Major Mudge is so fond of custard pie.

**Uncle J.** (*taking up the basket*). Here are your eggs, Deborah, an' only one broken.

**Bob.** There now!

**Aunt D.** (*taking basket*). Well, it's a wonder; but if them cakes are burned, Bob Mathews, I'll never forgive ye.

[AUNT DEBORAH **exit C.**

**Uncle J.** Bob, I'm ashamed of ye. Why do you pester your Aunt Debby this way? Ain't you kind of ashamed of yourself?

**Bob.** Yes, I am, Uncle John; but she does rile me so sometimes, that I think I'll surely bust.

**Uncle J.** I expect you bother her a good deal too, Bob. Now I want you to promise me that you'll try your best to do all you can to make your Aunt Debby happy. You know she's gittin' old. She does an awful lot for you, Bob.

**Bob.** I know it, Uncle John, an' I will try; but it seems to me I jist get so filled up sometimes with devilishness, that if I don't let off steam by worryin' somebody, I'll explode. But I'm goin' to turn over a new leaf, Uncle John, an' right now.

**Uncle J.** That's right, Bob, an' see how long you can keep it clean.

**Bob.** I'll go now an' shell the peas fer dinner. That will kind of square me an' Aunt Debby, won't it?

**Uncle J.** I think it will, Bob. (**Exit BOB at C.**) Bob is just so full of the old Harry, that it is mighty hard work fer him to keep outen mischief. I wish that Debby could see him as I do. I'm afraid his city trainin' wasn't just the best he might 'a' had. His poor mother died when he was so young, and his father was too busy to take much care of him, so Bob was left to do about as he pleased. I think he'll come out all right though, an' I expect him to be my right hand when Jim is gone away.

**Enter BESSIE at C.**

**Bess.** (*excitedly*). Uncle John, the folks have begun to come, an' Aunt Debby says fer you to come up to the house right away.

**Uncle J.** All right. Who has come?



**Bess.** The Carter family, an' Hez Smith's folks. Kate Smith's got a new pink dress. Deacon Tidd an' John Henry drove up just as I started here, an' say, Uncle John, can't we young people have the barn fur a dance or two?

**Uncle J.** Well, Bessie, I guess there ain't anything to interfere. Sail in an' have as good a time as you can.

**Bess.** Oh, it's awfully good of you to let us. (*She runs up to the door.*) Come on, Bob! He says we can! Come on quick. (*Runs down to C., and throws her arms about his neck.*) Oh, you dear, good, jolly Uncle John!

**Uncle J.** (*stoops and kisses her*). There, child, now don't explode!

**Bess.** I'll try not to, Uncle John; but I'll have to try mighty hard.

**Uncle J.** Remember, Bessie, that to-day we are to bid good-bye to the brothers and husbands who are going to fight for the Union. Some of them may never return. We should think of that, little girl,

**Bess.** But Jim will come back, Uncle John. I know he won't get hurt.

**Uncle J.** I hope he will come back, Bessie, and we must all pray that Heaven will see fit to spare him for us.

[Exit UNCLE JOHN, C.]

**Bess.** Of course he'll come back. No one would dare to hurt our Jim. Why don't Bob come? (*Runs to door C. and calls.*) Bobbie! There he is, talkin' to that hateful Kate Smith. I'll never give Bob Mathews my share of pie again. Here comes John Henry Tidd. I guess I can show Mr. Bob that I don't care for him nohow.

**Enter JOHN HENRY, C.** *He sees BESSIE and turns to go away.*

**Bess.** Helloa, John Henry!

**John H.** (*bashfully*). Hello, Bess!

**Bess.** Come to Uncle John's dinner?

[*Sits on bench.*]

**John H.** Yep!

**Bess.** Any of your folks goin' to the war?

**John H.** Nope. Any of yourn?

**Bess.** Yep. Jimmy's goin'.

**John H.** Wonder ef he'll git shot?

**Bess.** Why, John Henry Tidd, ain't you ashamed of yourself?

**John H.** Nope. Fer he might you know.

**Bess.** Why did you an' your papa come for, if any of your folks ain't goin'?

**John H.** My dad's got the money that wuz give to the regiment. What do you call it? The do——

**Bess.** The donation. I wuz to one at the minister's once.

**John H.** So wuz I. I ate eleven doughnuts.

**Bess.** You pig! I never in my whole life ate more 'an seven at one time.

**John H.** Dad's goin to give the money to 'em to-day. He's goin' to make a speech too.

**Bess.** Is he?

**John H.** Yep. He's been practisin' in the barn fer a week. It begins, "Friends, Feller Citizens, an' Warriors for the Cause."

**Bess.** I'll bet Uncle John could make a better one.

**John H.** Mebbe he could; but dad's speech is a corker. (*Takes an apple from his pocket and offers it to her.*) Want a bite of apple?

**BOB enters C. ; he sees JOHN HENRY and stands listening.**

**Bess.** Gimme half.

**Bob** (*divides apple*). I think you're a heap sight prettier 'an Kate Smith.

**Bess.** Oh, go 'long now! (*She sees BOB.*) I think you're right pretty—fer a boy.

**Bob** (*coming forward*). Yes, he's a bird, ain't he! (*To JOHN HENRY.*) You long-legged combination of a jack-knife and a clothes-pin, get out of here, or I'll smash you one!

**John H.** Well, maybe you think you can!

**Bob.** I come mighty near bein' sure of it. I'd just like to try it a while any way. [*He throws off his coat and makes for JOHN HENRY.*]

**John H.** (*backing away*). Now stop!

**Bob.** Knock that chip off my shoulder. I dare you to.

**Bess.** Now, you boys just stop. (*They get to fight.*) Stop! or I'll call Uncle John!

[*The boys scuffle ; UNCLE JOHN enters at C., walks down and takes each by the collar.*]

**Uncle J.** Now ain't ye ashamed of yourselves? Bob, I'm ashamed of you! (*Shakes him.*) John Henry, I'm ashamed of you! (*Shakes JOHN HENRY.*) You two look for all the world like a bantam rooster and a big Shanghai. (*Shakes both boys.*) Now put on your coats and don't let me see any more such actions, or I'll trounce the two of you. (*Lets them go.*) It appears to me as though a love fer fightin' was penetratin' the systems of everybody.

[*He goes up stage. BOB and JOHN HENRY stoop to pick up their coats, and each fancies the other is about to strike. They turn again to fight. UNCLE JOHN comes down.*]

**Uncle J.** What were you boys doin'?

**Bob.** Giving a parting salute, Uncle John.

**Uncle J.** Well, let it be the last, or I'll give you both a broadside with the palm of my hand.

GRACE enters C.

**Grace.** Here we are, Uncle John, and we are going to dance the Virginia reel. *[Music, piano.]*

*[Enter at C. JIM, AUNT DEBORAH, DEACON TIDD, CAROLINE ANTWERP, and the guests as many as desired. GRACE and JIM stand L., AUNT DEBORAH, CAROLINE ANTWERP and DEACON TIDD R., MAJOR MUDGE and UNCLE JOHN C., BOB, BESSIE and JOHN H. at back. The guests group about.\*]*

**Major.** Select your partners! *(He crosses to R.)* Will you allow me the pleasure of your company, Miss—

*[DEBORAH and CAROLINE both step forward.]*

**Caroline** *(gushingly)*. Oh, Major, you are too kind.

**Aunt D.** *(aside)*. The forward minx, I know he meant me.

**Caroline.** Don't it just make you feel young again, Deacon?

**Deacon.** I can't say as it do, Caroline.

**Caroline.** Don't it make you feel like goin' with the boys, an' fightin' at the mouth of a bayonet?

**Deacon.** No, Caroline, I don't believe in fightin'.

**Uncle J.** What's that, Deacon? Why, when we were boys, you had the reputation of bein' the biggest fighter in all the country round. *[They all laugh.]*

**Caroline.** It's so romantic. I almost wish that I wuz a man. I've been thinkin' of puttin' on men's clothes an' goin' as a little drummer boy.

**Aunt D.** I think your age would prevent you goin' as a boy, Caroline.

**Caroline** *(spitefully)*. Oh, you think so, do you?

**Aunt D.** Yes, I think so! *[They go angrily up stage.]*

**Deacon** *(to UNCLE JOHN)*. 'Pears ter me as though war had begun in a certain quarter already.

**Uncle J.** That row begun nigh onto forty years ago, Deacon.

**Major** *(coming down, very enthusiastic)*. This puts me in mind of 1812. We started away just like this, an' 'Lizabeth said to me—said she—

**Jim.** Select your partners for a reel!

*[Music forte—"Money-Musk." They form for the dance.]*

*JIM and GRACE lead, MAJOR and CAROLINE, DEACON and DEBORAH, BOB and BESSIE, etc., etc. Music and dance figures. At the conclusion all stand laughing and talking.*

**Uncle J.** An' now let's go to the house, an' have some of Debby's good cakes and cider.

*[Exeunt all C., BOB and BESSIE stand at door, JIM and GRACE down L., GRACE seated.]*

\* N. B.—This scene must be well rehearsed, to avoid confusion, and played quickly.

**Bob** (*to BESSIE*). Come on, Bess, ain't we in this?

**Bess.** Say, Bob, you like me better than Kate Smith, don't you?

**Bob.** A blamed sight better. Now, come on, or we won't get our share.

**Bess.** I believe you think more of doughnuts than you do of me.

**Bob.** I do when I'm hungry. Come on. [*They exeunt C.*]

**Grace.** How sad it is, Jim, that all this joy of to-day must be followed by the separation to-morrow.

**Jim.** But it must be so, Grace dear. Our country has called for help from her sons, and you would not have me refuse mine?

**Grace.** No, Jim, it would not be right for you to stay, nor would I have you do so. But it is hard, very hard for me to let you go—now.

**Jim.** And it is hard for me to go, to leave you—my dear little wife.

**Grace.** Don't say that yet, Jim. It will bring bad luck.

**Jim.** No bad luck will ever come to me through you. I have never realized how much I love you until now. But when I come back you will give me the right to call you my wife.

**Grace** (*smiling*). Even that might be bad luck, Jim.

**Jim.** I am willing to risk it. [*Kisses her.*]

**Grace.** Here, Jim. (*She unclasps a chain and locket from her throat.*) Now, don't laugh, dear. Here is a locket; see it has my portrait and a lock of hair. I will give you this as an amulet to carry you safely through all danger and bring you back to me.

**Jim.** Heaven grant it may. [*He embraces her tenderly.*]

UNCLE JOHN enters C.

**Uncle J.** (*sees them. Aside*). This war will bring suffering to many a heart. May theirs be spared.

**Grace.** Uncle John, are you there?

**Uncle J.** (*comes down C.*). Yes, Grace.

**Jim.** Father, when I am gone, you will look after Grace.

**Uncle J.** As my own child, Jim.

**Grace.** My father! [*UNCLE JOHN takes her in his arms.*]

**Uncle J.** They were asking for you at the house. Aunt Debby sent me to find you.

**Jim.** Then come, Grace, or she will be after us herself. You know what Aunt Debby is when she has her mind made up.

**Grace.** Like unto the Medes and the Persians. Come, Jim. [*Exeunt at C., laughing.*]

**Uncle J.** (*looks fondly after them*). How can I let him go? The neighbors have always reproached me for being so wrapped up in Jim. He is so like his mother, so kind and thoughtful. Grace will make him a good wife, and with their children growing up about me, I will live again my own happy childhood. What if he should not come back? Oh, I cannot, will not let him go. (*The people outside sing softly the first verse of "America."* **UNCLE JOHN** *sinks on bench listening. At the conclusion of the song he rises.*) Yes, he shall go, and if his country needs his life, Thy will be done, Thy will be done.

**Enter** DEACON, TIDD and JOHN H., C.

**Deacon.** John Mathews, I wish you'd tell the people to come here. I want to give 'em this donation and start for home. These goings on are too much fer me. I'm gittin' old.

**Uncle J.** An' so am I, but it jist goes right to my heart to see the young folks enjoy themselves. I'll call 'em, Deacon, an' then I want to hear that speech. Give us a reg'ler old-fashioned Fourth of July one. You used to be a master-hand at oratin' down at the district school, eh, Deacon?

[**Exit** **UNCLE JOHN**, C.]

**Deacon** (*to* **JOHN HENRY**, *who has stood up by the door*). John Henry!

**John H.** (*comes down*). Yes, dad.

**Deacon.** I want you to sit down here and mind this box. Don't let it go out of your hands; do you hear?

**John H.** Yes, dad.

**Deacon.** If you do, an' I catch you at it, I'll hide you within an inch of your life.

**John H.** Yes, dad. [**JOHN H.** *takes the box from the DEACON and sits at L.*]

**Deacon.** I'd jist like to know why sich sons wuz given to me. John Henry, ye ain't got sense enough to pound sand in a rat hole.

**John H.** No, dad.

**Deacon.** Shut up! Yer brother Bill wuz smart, but just a leetle too smart fer me. He skipped out with three hundred dollars that he stole from that very identical cash box, an' he ain't been heard from since. Don't you ever try on any game like that, John Henry.

**John H.** I won't, dad.

**Deacon.** I know you won't. Bill can stay where he is; it was a good riddance of bad rubbish when he went. I'll prosecute him with the law if he ever dares to set foot here again. I won't try to hide anybody's dishonesty, not even my own family's; so remember that, John Henry.

**John H.** I will, dad.

**Enter JIM at C.**

**Jim.** Deacon !

**Deacon.** Well, James ?

**Jim.** Deacon, as I leave with the regiment to-morrow, I'll give you the keys to the store to-day. You have been very kind to me since I have been in your employ, and I want to thank you.

**Deacon.** I guess, Jim, we've only done our duty for each other, an' I'm sorry to have you go away. I'll take John Henry into the store in your place, an' see ef I can't make a man outen him.

**Jim.** I have the keys at the house, Deacon, and I'll bring them to you. [Starts C.]

**Deacon.** No hurry, James. Why don't them people come so that I can make my speech an' go home. I'll go after 'em, and when I go—they'll come. Now, John Henry, you mind what I told you, or you'll get what I promised you.

[Exit DEACON, C.]

**Jim.** He has never forgiven Bill, has he ?

**John H.** Nope !

**Jim.** Poor Bill, I wonder where he is now. Who knows, we may meet some day. Perhaps on the field of battle.

[JIM starts for door ; JOHN H. rises.]

**John H.** Say, Jim.

**Jim.** Well, John Henry ?

**John H.** They are passin' the apples around down to the house now, an' I ain't gettin' none. Do you s'pose dad 'ud care if I just run down there fer a minute to git my share. I'm awful hungry.

**Jim.** Did he tell you to stay here ?

**John H.** Yes, Jim, to take care of this box. But I won't be gone more'n a minute. You don't know how awful hungry fer apples I am.

**Jim.** Then go along, and I'll stay here until you get back. (JOHN HENRY runs out C.) Poor John Henry, I'm afraid he'll find as little pleasure in his life at home as Bill did. I feel that I ought to be doubly kind to him for Bill's sake.

**JOHN HENRY re-enters, his hands full of apples.**

**John H.** I got 'em, an' dad didn't see me. He'll never know I've been away. Won't you have an apple ?

**Jim.** No, thank you. Now don't go away again, John Henry.

**John H.** Nope, I won't. (Exit JIM at C.) Jim's a mighty good feller. I wish dad was as good to me. Mebby Bill will come back some day an' take me away. Bill wuz allers mighty good to me too.

BILL enters cautiously at C.

BILL (*looking carefully about*). Is the coast clear I wonder?

JOHN H. (*who is down at L. eating an apple*). I've got to go to the horse trough an' git a drink. (*Starts up and sees BILL*.) Bill! Is it really you?

BILL (*putting his hand over JOHN HENRY's mouth*). Hush! Is father here?

JOHN H. He's up at the house. Where did you come from, Bill?

BILL. From the West. I just dropped in on my way to New York in my special train.

JOHN H. You don't want to let dad know you are here. He'd have you put in jail.

BILL. Well, I'll take mighty particular good care he don't see me then. Give me one of them apples, I'm hungry.

JOHN H. What have you been a-doin', Bill, since you went away?

BILL. Trampin', here lately, an' I'm out of clothes an' money. Got any money, John Henry?

JOHN H. Nope; dad he don't give me none.

BILL. Well, he never would let me revel in wealth, so I helped myself. (*Sees the box*.) What have you got there?

JOHN H. A box of dad's.

BILL. His old cash box. What's in it?

JOHN H. The money that was donated to the volunteers. He told me to take care of it till he got back; but I sneaked away fer a minute to get them apples.

BILL. You don't know how much is in it, do you?

JOHN H. Nope.

BILL (*aside*). It wouldn't take me long to find out. I've opened it before. (*Aloud*.) I wish you'd try to get some more apples for me, I haven't had a square meal for a week. I'll keep the box till you get back—unless I see some one comin'.

JOHN H. I hadn't ought to go. But I'll get 'em for you, Bill.

[Exit JOHN H., C.]

BILL. I wonder if it was luck or the devil that sent me here to-day. I was about to slink through the town without being seen, but the remembrance of my friendship with Jim brought me here. I wouldn't care to have him see me though. (*Takes up the box*.) The regiment funds in the old cash box. I wonder why dad keeps on using this; any one can open it with a knife blade. Suppose I opened it and took the money. Dad can afford to pay it back again. No one would ever suspect me. It's the kind of a lock that makes burglary a temptation. I'll just have a look at what's inside. (*He opens the box*.) Somebody is coming! (*Listens*.) No, a false alarm. (*Takes packet*)

*of bills from the envelope.)* Just look at the greenbacks ! It is a sight for sore eyes. *(Puts the money into his pocket.)* Dad, this will about square you and me ; but you will be rather surprised when you find that you have paid your debts. *(Takes a newspaper from his pocket, and places it in the envelope which contains the money.)* The old man will think this is about the costliest piece of news he ever paid for. *(He puts the envelope in the box and relocks it.)* Quite a good day's work. I'll have a square meal to-night anyway.

**Enter** JOHN H. *hurriedly at C.*

**John H.** Bill, dad's comin' !

**Bill.** Did he see you ?

**John H.** No ! I dodged under the currant bushes and crawled here.

**Bill.** He must never know that I have been here. Promise me that you won't tell. Swear it ! If you ever tell, I'll kill you !

**John H.** I won't tell, Bill ! I swear I won't !

**Bill.** Then good-bye, John Henry !

**John H.** Good-bye, Bill ! **(Exit BILL C.)** There he goes crawlin' through the bushes toward the woods. Gracious, if dad ever finds I've left the barn he'll skin me alive.

*[He sits on the bench at L. holding the box.]*

**Enter the** DEACON *and* JIM, C.

**Jim.** Here are the keys of the store, Deacon. You will find them all here. *[Hands keys.]*

**Deacon.** Thank you, James. Now for my speech, as at last they're comin'. *(Takes the box from JOHN H.)* A body would think they didn't want the money. It's all in here. Five hundred dollars. A pretty nice sum, eh, Jim ? *(Opens the box, takes out the envelope, finds the paper.)* What is this ! Where is the money ? It is gone ! gone !

**Jim.** Gone !

**Deacon.** Gone ! I've been robbed ! Do you hear ? Robbed ! John Henry, did you let go of this box ? Were you out of the barn ? Answer me ! Can't you speak ?

**Jim.** Tell him the truth, John Henry !

**Deacon.** I know the money was in the box when I gave it to him. Why don't you answer me ?

**Jim.** Tell him, John.

**John H.** I wuz away fer a minute, dad ; don't beat me. I only went to get something to eat. I was so hungry——

**Deacon.** You idiot ! Was anybody in the barn when you went away ?

**John H.** No one but Jim !

**Deacon.** Jim ?



**John H.** You watched it while I was away, didn't you, Jim?

**Jim.** Yes, I was here!

**Deacon** (*to JOHN HENRY*). How long were you away?

**John H.** Only fer a minute, dad.

**Deacon.** Long enough for the money to go, too.

**Jim.** What do you mean?

**Deacon.** That after all your pretensions to honesty, you are no better than my son Bill!

**Jim.** You do not think that I—no—no!

**Deacon.** John Henry, go outside until I call you. (*Exit JOHN H., c.*) James Mathews, I'll speak plain, I believe you stole that money.

**Jim.** I—stole—the money?

**Deacon.** You had the key to that box. You were here alone long enough to open it. I don't like to think it of you, Jim, but I can't do anything else—now.

**Jim.** You do not believe I am a thief? You cannot believe it of me; I swear to you that I am innocent!

**Deacon.** Now look here, Jim. Give the money back and I'll say no more about it.

**Jim.** Deacon, I swear to you—

**Enter BESSIE at c.**

**Bess.** Here we come, Deacon, to listen to the speech.

**Deacon.** Give it to me, Jim, or I'll accuse you before them all.

**Jim.** You have no right—I am innocent!

**Deacon.** Well, the money is gone, and some one has got to suffer for it.

**Enter, c., GRACE, UNCLE JOHN, AUNT D., CAROLINE, MAJOR, BOB and the others.** MAJOR *places the bench c. for the DEACON.*

**Grace.** Come, Deacon, now for your eloquence. [*Stands R.*

**Major.** As old Col. Taylor said, just as we started in to the battle of Monterey—says he—

**Caroline.** I am just filled to the brim with patriotism—hooray!

**Bob.** It looks to me now more like a hard cider jag.

[*AUNT D. cuffs him; he retires.*

**Aunt D.** Do be quiet, Caroline, and let people talk who have something to say.

**Grace.** Come, Deacon!

**Bob.** Blaze away!

**Jim.** Deacon, I beg of you to spare me. I swear that I am innocent. Think of my father.

**Uncle J.** What is the matter, Jim, you are as pale as a ghost?

[*Comes to c.*

**Deacon.** Matter enough. The money—

**Jim** (*grasps his arm*). Stop! Give me until to-morrow. For my father's sake—for her sake. [*Points to GRACE.*]

**Deacon.** I have decided to pay the regiment money to Captain Smith to-morrow. There will be no speech to-day.

**Caroline.** Oh, Deacon! [*Goes up stage.*]  
**Uncle J.** Such a disappointment. [*Follows him up.*]

**Jim.** Thank God, they will not know.

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

**Scene.**—*A kitchen interior. Doors R. and L. 2 E. Window in flat R. C., with curtain. Door in flat L. C. Fireplace R. 1 E. Cupboard at back between door and window. Table at L. Kitchen chairs, etc., with big arm-chair before fireplace.*

**BESSIE and BOB discovered.** *BESSIE is churning C. BOB sits on table watching her.*

**Bess.** And don't they ever churn in the city, Bob?

**Bob.** Naw! You can't make butter out of chalk and water.

**Bess.** But where do they get their butter?

**Bob.** Don't have none!

**Bess.** Then what do they eat on their bread?

**Bob.** Butterine.

**Bess.** Well, it strikes me they don't have anything that's real in the city.

**Bob.** Well, you kin bet your life they do!

**Bess.** What?

**Bob.** Why, real fun.

**Bess.** We have that in the country.

**Bob.** I hain't seen none of it.

**Bess.** Oh, Bob, since you've been here, I think you've had a real good time.

**Bob.** Yes, I appear to enjoy myself; but things ain't what they used to be.

**Bess.** Everybody is talkin' of nothin' but war and fightin' just now; but you wait until winter comes an' then I'll show you what fun we have.

**Bob** (*gloomily*). What can you do to excite yourself in a place like this?

**Bess.** We have singin' schools, an' spellin' schools, an' sleigh rides, an' donation parties or the preacher's folks. I guess people in the city don't have no more fun than that.

**Bob.** Hully Gee! We have de Variety. I wouldn't give an evenin' at de Variety fer a whole week of donation parties.

**Bess.** What's a Variety, Bob?

**Bob.** What's a Variety? It's a place where yer preachers an' deacons go to enjoy themselves when dey goes to de city an' wants to see de tiger.

**Bess.** Oh, Bob! Deacons never go to the circus.

**Bob.** Well, maybe not. But they goes out sometimes to see the elephant.

**Bess** (*stops churning*). It's your turn to churn now.

**Bob.** Not much. You've only done a hundred and fifty dashes, and my turn don't come till a hundred an' fifty-five!

[*BESS takes up the dasher and counts aloud from fifty-one to fifty-five. BOB jumps down from the table, whistles a dance tune and does a few steps.*]

**Bess.** Come on, it's your turn now.

**Bob.** Well, I suppose I must. (*Churns violently.*) S'pose my old friends "Irish Mike" or "Ash-barrel Jimmy" should see me now. They would never believe that their old pard could descend to such menial female labor. (*He stops.*) Say, Bessie!

**Bess** (*who has taken his place on table*). Yep!

**Bob.** I'll give you my piece of pie at dinner if you'll rest me.

**Bess.** Nope! I ain't a-goin' to.

**Bob.** I'll let you read that story of "Red-handed Bill" that Aunt Debby licked me for havin'.

**Bess.** You might as well go on, Bob, I won't rest you.

**Bob.** I'll—— Say, Bess, would you like to see a variety?

**Bess.** Yep.

**Bob.** If you'll rest me another hundred and fifty, I'll show you how they does.

**Bess** (*jumps down from table*). 'Bob Mathews, I believe you are lazy.

**Bob.** No, Bess, I am not lazy; but I don't like to work. (*She takes the dasher and begins to churn.*) Now, Bess, you must suppose that I am a bloomin' young woman with curly yellow hair, a white skirt that comes to here and stands out like that!

[*He imitates the dress of a ballet dancer.*]

**Bess.** Oh, Bob Mathews.

[*Turns away.*]

**Bob.** An' pink tights.

**Bess.** What's tights, Bob?

**Bob.** Long pink stockings that look like—— Well, just like they didn't have any stockings on.

**Bess.** Why, Bob!

**Bob.** They come running on just like this, (*imitates*) an' then begin to dance.

**Bess.** A dance! Bob, I won't look. I'm a Baptist, an' I won't go against my morals. (*BOB continues to dance. BESS turns to watch him. She forgets to churn, and when he stops she applauds.*) Oh, Bob, teach me that, an' I'll do it at our next Sunday school entertainment. Wouldn't it just surprise Aunt Debby and the preacher's folks?

**Bob.** Well, I rather think it would. Come on, then. (*She takes his hand.*) You stand like this, put your foot like this, you turn like this, an' kick like that!

[*She imitates his movement, and as they make the last kick, UNCLE JOHN enters at L.*

**Uncle J.** (*starting back in surprise*). What is all this?

**Bob.** Holy smoke, it's grandad!

[*He walks up to the window whistling. BESSIE takes the dasher and churns vigorously.*

**Uncle J.** Can't you children keep your feet on the floor where they belong? What were you trying to do?

**Bob.** That is a new exercise they are trying to introduce into the public schools. It is very fashionable in perlite society just now.

**Uncle J.** Well, I guess you two had better leave it to perlite society then. [*Crosses and sits in chair by fireplace.*

**Bess** (*very demurely*). Bob, I guess the butter's come.

[*BOB crosses C. to BESS.*

**Uncle J.** Then take it out to your Aunt Debby.

[*BOB and BESSIE take hold of the churn.*

**Bob.** Let go, Bess, I can carry it by myself.

[*He puts his arms about the churn and starts to L.*

**Bess.** You had better let me help you, Bob.

**Bob.** Go away, Bess. I've got a muscle like a slugger.

[*BESS opens the door L. for him; he staggers out; there is a crash and a yell.*

**Bess** (*stands in the doorway horror-stricken*). Oh, Bob, what have you done?

**Bob** (*outside*). I've let it drop. Give my regards to Aunt Debby. I've started for Canada! [*Exit BESS at L.*

**Uncle J.** If I hadn't raised two boys, I would think that there was no hope for Bob; but I wouldn't change him for all his wild ways. If children only knew what anxious days and nights were passed for them by their parents, I think they would be more careful of what they do.

**Enter GRACE at L.**

**Grace.** Good morning, Uncle John.

**Uncle J.** Good morning, Grace. How are you to-day?

**Grace.** Pretty well, thank you. And how do you find yourself?

**Uncle J.** Fair to middlin'. Debby, she feels a little out-o'-sorts about somethin' Caroline Antwerp said yesterday about her piecrusts; but I guess she'll get over it.

**Grace.** I think she will, Uncle John.

**Uncle J.** You know how it is in a community with two unmarried women of the age of Caroline and Debby. They are more jealous of each other than two old hens.

*[Both laugh heartily.]*

**Grace.** Major Mudge drove past the school-house and told me that he was coming here; so I gave the children a half holiday and came with him. I couldn't stay away as Jimmy is to leave us to-day.

**Uncle J.** You have always been welcome, Grace, and now we feel as though this was your place by right. It seems real comfortable to have you around.

**Grace.** Uncle John, what if Jim should not come back!

**Uncle J.** We would try and comfort ourselves with the thought that he had died like an honest man and a patriot.

**Grace.** I feel as though I could not let him go. He is to be my husband.

**Uncle J.** He is my only son. We must not be selfish, even in our love, when our country is at stake.

**Enter MAJOR MUDGE, I.**

**Major.** That is right, Uncle John, cheer her up. 'As I said to my first wife, 'Lizabeth, when I started away to fight the Mexicans, sez I—(GRACE laughs.) There, now, you are lookin' right peart an' chipper like.

**Grace.** And I feel better, Major. Uncle John and yourself have cheered me greatly.

**Major.** Just as I said to Elizabeth, said I—

**Uncle J.** I console myself with this, even though I know my boy is going into danger; he goes away with a clean name, not with a cloud of disgrace over him.

**Major.** Like Deacon Tidd's son Bill. The Deacon has been gettin' harder an' harder since Bill run away last spring.

**Uncle J.** It's too bad. Bill wuz allers a good-hearted boy—a little wild inclined maybe—but the Deacon was allers powerful hard with him. He could never remember that boys must be boys.

**Major.** How did Jim an' the Deacon get along together in the store?

**Uncle J.** Pretty fair. Of late Jim has been dissatisfied like; all nervous an' worked up about the war an' such trouble.

**Grace.** Why will brothers quarrel and bring so much misery to each other?

**Major.** It occurs in the best of families.

**Uncle J.** There is never any trouble so bad but what it might be worse. I allers think when people are groanin' over hard times an' bad luck an' poor crops, that they ought to be thankful they still have their health and homes.

**Major.** Yes, they should.

**Uncle J.** An' when they are moanin' over the loss of a friend, or the death of one they love, they'd better far be glad the loved ones are not suffering from some shame or disgrace even worse than death.

*JIM enters at L., and stands at the door listening.  
The others do not observe him.*

**Major.** That is a Gospel fact.

**Uncle J.** For my part, I'd rather my boy was dead, and know that he had died bravely and honorably, than to find out that he had become a liar or a thief. *[JIM comes forward.]*

**Jim.** Father, suppose some one had accused me of what you said just now, and proofs of guilt were strong against me, but I would tell you that I was innocent. What would you do?

**Grace.** What do you mean, Jim? *[She comes to him.]*

**Jim.** What would you do, father?

**Uncle J. (rises).** Well, Jimmy, if you told me you were innocent, I'd stick by you till the last trump.

**Jim (taking UNCLE JOHN'S hand gratefully).** Thank you, father. Grace, may I speak with you a moment?

*[They go up stage.]*

**Uncle J. (aside to MAJOR).** Look at them, Major, are they not a couple to be proud of?

**Major.** Yes, as Bob says, "They are a pair to draw to." *(Both laugh.)* Bless my soul, John! I've clean forgot what I stopped for. As I was passin' Deacon Tidd's store he gave me this letter to give to you, an' I wuz as near to forgettin' it as two peas. *[Takes the letter from the lining of his hat.]*

**Uncle J.** It strikes me, Major, that you'd forget your head some day ef it wasn't fastened tight to your shoulders.

**Major.** That is just what 'Lizabeth allers said to me—says she.

**Uncle J.** Come, Major, we'll go into the sittin'-room, an' I'll get my spectacles an' read the Deacon's letter. Debby will draw you a glass of cider. Come on, an' let the young folks do a little talkin'. *[They laugh and dig each other in the ribs.]*

**Major.** I declare, John, ef it hadn't been for you, like as not I'd a stayed here and spoiled the whole thing, ez 'Lizabeth said to me. *(They start off R. arm in arm.)* Jist afore I started away to fight the Mexicans—

*[They go out R. JIM and GRACE come down.]*

**Jim.** Grace, I want your comfort and advice.

**Grace.** I'm afraid I need too much comfort myself to spare any ; but I'll do my best, and we will share alike.

**Jim.** Grace dear, I am in great trouble.

**Grace.** In trouble, Jim ?

**Jim.** If I could only be certain that you would not doubt me.

**Grace.** Doubt you !

**Jim.** Yesterday the regiment funds were stolen from Deacon Tidd's cash-box, and—I can't tell you ! Don't you see what I mean ?

**Grace.** And Deacon Tidd says that you—that *you* took the money ! He dares say that ?

**Jim.** Yes, Grace.

**Grace.** He says what is not true !

**Jim** (*taking her in his arms*). I knew that you would believe in me.

**Grace.** How could I doubt you. Jim, does your father know of this ?

**Jim.** No, Grace. The money was taken from the cash-box yesterday. Because I was the only one besides himself who had a key to the box, the Deacon accused me and threatened to expose me before my father's guests. I implored him to give me until to-day, thinking perhaps I might find some clue.

**Grace.** And to-day ?

**Jim.** I am as much in the dark as yesterday, and I must tell my father that I—am accused of being a thief. He said a little while ago that he would rather see me dead. Will he believe in me ?

**Grace.** He must ! But, Jim, your regiment is ordered to the front to-day.

**Jim.** And I cannot go. The Deacon swore that unless I restored the money, he would have me placed under arrest. Think of my father's shame. He has always been so proud of me, and see what I have brought upon him.

**Grace.** But you are innocent !

**Jim.** No man is believed innocent until he has proved himself so. If I can only do that before the regiment starts away.

[UNCLE JOHN *calls outside*.

**Uncle J.** Major !

**Jim.** Here comes father now.

UNCLE JOHN *enters at R., laughing. He has the letter in his hands still unopened.*

**Uncle J.** I declare, the Major is the funniest man I ever saw. He has just gope and forgotten his wagon whip. If he don't lose himself some day it will be on account of—(*observes JIM*

and GRACE). Well, what is the matter with you two? Why, Gracie, child, you are crying, and there are tears in Jim's eyes. You haven't been quarrelling, have you?

Jim. No, father!

Uncle J. What is the matter then?

Jim. Father I—I—no, I cannot tell him.

Uncle J. Well, you two do behave mighty sin'gler. If you are feelin' bad on account of your separation don't be ashamed of it. Here, Jim, I can't find my spectacles. I want you to read this letter for me. [*He hands JIM the letter, and sits before the fireplace.*]

Jim (*aside to GRACE*). It is from the Deacon. (*He opens letter and reads.*) "I am coming this morning to see you on particular business. Your son, James,"—I cannot read it—I cannot! (*He hands the letter to GRACE.*) Go on, you read it to him. [*GRACE takes the letter and kneels by UNCLE JOHN.*]

Grace (*reading*). "Your son James who I thought was an honest man——"

Uncle J. What is that!

Grace. "Has turned out to be——"

[*Hesitates.*]

Jim. Go on!

Grace. "A thief!"

Uncle J. A thief! My Jim!

[*Rises.*]

Jim. Let him hear it all!

Grace. "And yesterday, robbed my cash-box of the regiment money—five hundred dollars!"

Uncle J. My God!

[*Falls back into the chair.*]

Jim. Father!

[*Starts toward him.*]

Uncle J. (*motions him back*). Wait! Let me hear it all!

Grace. "If you can make him return the money, or will repay it yourself, I will promise to say nothing about the matter; but if you don't, I will see what the law can do!"

Uncle J. Is that all?

Grace. All!

[*She rises.*]

Uncle J. (*rises and crosses to JIM and looks into his face*). Is this true, Jim?

Jim. Not one word! Father, you do not doubt me?

Uncle J. No! Jim, no!

[*Offers his hand.*]

Jim. Thank you, father.

[*Grasps his hand.*]

Enter BOB, L.

Bob. Hello, Grace! Hello, Jim! Say, grandpa, Ole Screw-eye Tidd an' John Henry ditto are drivin' up the lane. Shall I tell 'em to come in here?

Uncle J. Yes, tell them to come in here!

Bob. All right. Say, Jim, I'm goin' to lick John Henry; he gave Bess a candy-heart yesterday, with "I love you" printed



on it, an' I don't like to have none of our family mix up with them Tiddses.

**Jim.** Go, Bob, do as father said. (**Exit** BOB, L.) Father you won't let anything the Deacon says change your mind, will you?

**Uncle J.** Jim, I told you awhile ago if you got' into trouble, an' I thought you were innocent, I'd stand by you until doomsday, an, I'll do it—or break my neck.

**Enter** L., DEACON TIDD, *followed by* BOB, *and* JOHN HENRY.

**Uncle J.** Good-mornin', Deacon.

**Deacon.** Good-mornin'! Good-mornin', Miss.

**Uncle J.** Sit down, Deacon. Sit down, John Henry. Bob, you go an' tend to the Deacon's horses.

**Bob** (*aside to* JOHN H. *as he goes out*). I'm a-goin to thrash you the first time I get a chance. [**Exit** BOB *at* L.]

**Uncle J.** Jim, you an' Grace sit here. Deacon, lets settle this in as few words as possible. Will you tell me just what you want?

**Deacon.** That is what I am here for.

**John H.** Yes, Uncle John, that is what he is here for.

**Deacon.** Yesterday I left John Henry in the barn to watch my cash-box containing this money. Jim come in while John was alone, and knowin' what was in the box, he let John Henry go away on an errand, and while he was gone—(*turns and looks at* JIM) *somebody* unlocked the box and stole the money.

**John H.** Jim, I don't want you to think——

**Deacon.** You shut up! Now there was only two persons had keys to that box—one was me, the other was Jim.

**John H.** Now, Jim, I didn't say——

**Deacon.** You be quiet er I'll hide ye. Now go out doors till I've done talkin'.

**John H.** Yes, dad. But, Jim, I ain't said one word that——

**Deacon.** Go on out!

**John H.** Yes, dad.

[**Exit** JOHN H., L.]

**Deacon.** Now, John Mathews, if you kin get Jim to give this money back, or pay it back yourself, I will let matters drop just where they be.

**Jim.** I did not take the money, and I will not consent to father paying you any amount.

**Uncle J.** Be quiet, Jim. (*To* DEACON.) The amount, you say, is five hundred dollars?

**Deacon.** That is what I said.

**Jim.** Father, I——

**Uncle J.** Be quiet, Jim. An' if I pay you that sum, you will acquit my boy of everything?

**Deacon.** Yes. If you don't, I'll have him jailed.

**Jim.** I dare you to do your worst. I am not guilty.

**Deacon.** Well, I can come mighty near to provin' you so, anyhow.

**Uncle J.** He is right. Deacon, I will pay you this money.

**Jim.** Father, I will not allow it.

**Uncle J.** Jim, my boy, I'm doin' what I think is for the best.

**Deacon** (*impatiently*). Come, decide! I can't dilly-dally here much longer. Are you going to pay me or not? What do you say?

**Uncle J.** I will pay the money. (*JIM makes a gesture of entreaty.*) Jim, I am doin' my duty. Go, now, an' let the Deacon an' me settle this.

**Grace.** Come, Jim. [*She leads him off at R.*]

**Deacon.** Come, I am in a hurry.

**Uncle J.** Deacon, I haven't five hundred dollars in ready money, but I will give you my note.

**Deacon.** I don't trust to notes. If you will give me a mortgage on your farm for a year's time—I don't want to be hard—why, all right. You needn't say anything about it to Jim, fer he'd never give in.

**Uncle J.** I consent.

**Deacon.** I brung the mortgage papers with me, in case we would need them. (*Takes papers from his pocket.*) You can sign 'em now an' we can swear to 'em this afternoon. An' here's the statement I'll give you for it.

[*UNCLE JOHN signs the mortgage papers and DEACON the statement.*]

**Deacon.** There, now, is yer son's liberty.

[*Gives UNCLE J. the statement and pockets the papers.*]

**Uncle J.** (*goes to door R. and calls*). Jim!

**Enter JIM.**

**Jim.** Yes, father!

**Uncle J.** (*Hands JIM the statement*). There, my boy, you are free.

**Jim** (*to DEACON*). You shall suffer for this some day. I shall find out the truth and it may strike nearer to home than you dream.

**Deacon.** What do you mean?

**Uncle J.** Stop, Deacon! Stop, Jim! Deacon, you have now what you wished. I have given you five hundred dollars to stop the scandalous tongues of this community who would be glad through envy to believe wrong of my boy. You have always pretended to be my friend, but you have tried to ruin Jim and through him me. I know you now as you are. Go!

**Deacon.** You'd better not say too much, John Mathews. You

may want my help some day. You've always held your head above me, yet, in spite of this trouble, I'd a still been friends with you. Now we are enemies, and I'll do you all the harm I can !

**Jim.** Oh, you cur !

**Uncle J.** Stop, Jim, his gray hairs protect him. Go !

[Exit DEACON, L.

**Jim.** Father, do you think you have done what is best ?

**Uncle J.** My boy, I know how glad folks are if they can drag a man down. Even if you were brought to trial and cleared, part of the shame would always cling to you. When your dear mother lay dyin', she put you in my arms an' said, "John, I give him to you, promise me that you will never let any trouble come to him that you can help." She gave you to me innocent, and I will try and keep you so in the eyes of men ; you must answer for yourself to Heaven.

**Jim.** Yes, father.

**Uncle J.** You have heard me speak of your Uncle James, my only brother. When he was about your age, he was accused as you are now ; but he was tried and sent to the prison. He served his sentence and when he was again free the guilty one was found. But it was too late then ; Jim's best chance in life was gone, an' he died a broken-hearted man. I thought of him to-day, and felt there was no sacrifice I could make which would be too great to save you from his fate.

**Jim.** God bless you, father. I can pay the money ten times over ; but I can never repay your love and kindness.

**Uncle J.** Don't let's say any more about it, Jim. Now go to Grace and dry her tears.

**Enter from R. AUNT DEBBY, her dress covered with flour, the rolling-pin in her hand. BESSIE follows her, crying.**

**Aunt D.** Jim, Bessie says the regiment is comin' down the street, and that you must join 'em as they go by here. Is that true ?

**Jim.** Yes, Aunt Debby.

**Aunt D.** And I haven't got half your things ready. John, don't you let them carry him off in this way. Jim, don't you go. I'll hide you till they are gone.

**Uncle J.** Debby, I am ashamed of you. Jim is not the kind of stuff that cowards are made of.

**Aunt D.** Then I'll go and get the things ready. Come on, Bess. There's the cookies and sassafras to put in his grip-sack, and—oh, Jim, if you go and get shot, an' run around in damp weather and get your feet wet, an' catch cold an' die. I'll put catnip in your carpet-bag an' make a mustard plaster fer your back.

[AUNT D. **exits** R. MAJOR *comes in and salutes her as she passes him.*

BOB **enters** L. *with a drum and a flag.*

**Major.** Hooray! This brings me back to the old times of the Mexican War. When I started off to fight, 'Lizabeth said to me——

**Bob,** Shoulder arms—'bout face! Salute! Say, Jim, can't I go too? Young America's ragin' in me so big that I expect to explode! Hooray!

**Major.** Hooray! [*Music, piano. "The Girl I Left Behind Me."*]

GRACE **enters** at R.

**Grace.** Jim, the boys are coming this way and you must go.

**Jim.** I must, Grace dear.

**Grace.** Then go, Jim, and do the best you can.

[*He changes his coat to the uniform.*]

BESSIE **enters** R. *with his coat and cap. Music forte.*

AUNT D. **enters** at R.

**Aunt D.** Oh my, Jim, they are here! (*She drops the grip-sack she carries on MAJOR'S feet and throws her arms about his neck.*) Write often, Jim, and don't forget the mustard plasters.

**Major.** Good-bye, Jim,—as I says to 'Lizabeth.

**Uncle J.** The boys are at the door. God bless you, Jim, and take care of you.

**Grace.** And bring you back to us when your duty is done!

[JIM *stands* C. *with his arm about GRACE, and holding* UNCLE JOHN'S *hand.* AUNT D. *sobbing in the MAJOR'S arms.* BOB *and BESSIE marching to music, at L.*

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

**Scene.**—*Same as that of Act II.*

AUNT DEBBY *discovered at table, peeling potatoes.*

**Aunt D.** (*sings*).

"Oh, Beulah land, sweet Beulah land,  
As on thy highest mount I stand."

(*Sighs.*) I declare to goodness ef it don't seem as though

everything went wrong to once. Even potatoes are little this year. I suppose it's because the whole universe is concentratin' its attention to this struggle between brothers, an' has no time to think of such things as taters an' crops. To-day is Jimmy's birthday. Poor boy! I wonder if he is enjoyin' it, an' what he's doin'. John keeps worryin' about him all the time, but he won't say nothin'. An' what with hard times an' poor crops—well, I think we will do mighty well to pull through the winter. (*Sound of sleigh-bells heard. She goes up to window.*) Laws-a-mercy! Here comes Major Mudge down the road; 'pears to me that he gits more military-lookin' ever day. (*Sound of bells, nearer.*) AUNT DEBBY *rolls down her sleeves and adjusts her cap and apron.* I declare, I do look a sight. (*Bells cease, knock at door in flat.*) I do feel that flustered! (*She goes to door and opens it.*) Well, Major, is it really you? Come right in.

*The MAJOR enters. He is well wrapped up, and has a tippet tied over his military cap. He stamps his feet and slaps his hands to warm them.*

**Major.** Howdy do, Debby!

**Aunt D.** Howdy do, Major. How are you?

**Major** (*taking off his wraps*). Just pretty tol'able, thank ye. How are all of your folks? [*Sits before fire.*]

**Aunt D.** Fair to middlin'. Any news from the village, Major?

**Major.** Andy Smith has got the flamatory rheumatism.

**Aunt D.** You don't say!

**Major.** An' Mehitable Jenkins has run away with a Cincinnati drummer.

**Aunt D.** You don't mean it? Mehitable Jenkins. Well, of all things! What do her folks say?

**Major.** Well, you know, Mehitable was not young, an' her pa said it was a good thing she went; but Mrs. Jenkins took it tol'able hard. You know Mehitable was a pow'ful good hand to help her with the housework.

**Aunt D.** She *will* be missed. I wonder if she will be churched?

**Major.** Like as not. That is the first thing people 'round here generally think about. If one of the lambs gits out of the fold, they generally try to keep 'em out altogether instead of tryin' to coax 'em back.

**Aunt D.** I allus thought Mehitable wuz gettin' lively ever since I saw her at meetin' with that store cloak on; the one with the bead fringe. You can't fool me. Was the man a good-lookin' feller?

**Major.** Fair to middlin'.

**Aunt D.** Poor Mehitable ! At her age too ! Well, there's no tellin' what might happen to any of us.

**Major.** Mary Ann Smith just got a telegram from the hospital at Cairo, that her son Jake has been wounded, an' fer her to come to him at once.

**Aunt D.** Now, that's just too bad. Jake was everything to her. Oh, Major, what would become of John if he would get word that somethin' awful had happened to Jim.

**Major.** Jim is all right. A person hadn't ought to worry these days, for if they begin they'll just be on pins and needles all the time. As I says to 'Lizabeth in 1845—sez I——

**Enter BOB at R.**

**Bob.** Hello, Major, how's yer wooden leg this morning ?

**Aunt D.** Why, Bob Mathews, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

**Bob.** What for, because I told the truth ? It is a wooden leg, ain't it, Major ?

**Major.** Yes, sir, an' I'm not ashamed of it. I won it while I wuz fightin' for your country. I got it in the Mexican War.

**Bob.** I wonder if that is where Aunt Debby got her wooden head !

**Major** (*laughing*). That's one on you, Debby !

**Aunt D.** (*indignantly*). Bob Mathews, you impudent boy. I'll tell your grandpa on you.

**Major.** Boys will be boys, Debby. Don't take what Bob said so much to heart. You can't help your head, you know.

**Bob.** No, for she was born so. [*Both laugh.*]

**Aunt D.** Major Mudge, you are an old fool, and I'm ashamed to think that a man of your age would consort with a boy in makin' fun of me. But I'd like to know what more I could expect from a broken-down, wooden-legged old man like you. As for you, Bob Mathews, I'll tell your grandpa on you as sure as I'm a living woman. Oh, Major Mudge, you mean, mean thing !

[*She exits angrily at R.*]

**Major** (*staring after her*). Whew !

**Bob.** Well, I'll be jiggered !

**Major.** Who would a' thought it ?

**Bob.** Oh, she's a bird !

**Major.** A reg'lar hummer ! Is she often took that way ?

**Bob.** Reg'lar as the day comes.

**Major.** Well, I'll be dashed. I hadn't ought to have laughed, Bob. It was a mighty measly joke anyway.

**Bob.** Oh, I wouldn't worry about it if I were you. She likes you and it will be all right. Come on, lets see if we can't square ourselves before she tells grandad.

[**Exeunt MAJOR and BOB at R.**]

**Enter** **UNCLE JOHN** *at L., he walks to the window and looks out.*

**Uncle J.** It must be pretty cold out to-day. I hope Bob has all the critters warm and comfortable; I wouldn't like to think that I was in here by a warm fire and that some one else was sufferin' outside. *(He sits in front of the fire. Music, piano. "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground.")* I wonder if Jim is safe and warm to-night, or if he is trampin' through the cold and snow while I am sittin' here by the fire. I'll try not to worry, for I gave him into your hands, Father of us all, and Thy will be done. This is Jim's birthday. Just twenty-five years ago, his mother laid him in my arms. "We will call him James, for your brother," she said. "You must do your best for him and keep him safe from harm." Then she died, and he wuz all that wuz left to me. I have watched him, and cared for him, and every year I have loved him more and more. How well I remember when he put on his first trousers and boots. He wuz mighty proud of them little red-topped boots. Then afore I knew it, he wuz a man grown, but he has always been to me the same little Jim. This is the first birthday that he has ever spent away from home, an' we shall have things just the same as if he was here. Maybe he will know then that we are thinking of him. *(GRACE enters softly at L.)* I wish I could hear from him to-day. He surely won't forget to write on his birthday. *[GRACE comes down to him.]*

**Grace.** He has not forgotten us. See, a letter for you and one for me.

**Uncle J.** Is he well, Grace? Is he safe and well? Read me his letter.

**Grace** *(reading)*. "Father, I have received a birthday gift. I have been appointed Captain of the Fourteenth Ohio Volunteers." A Captain, father! Isn't that glorious! Captain James Mathews! *[She kisses the letter.]*

**Uncle J.** Our Jim!

**Grace.** And see, he encloses a letter from his Colonel. *(Reads.)* "Private James Mathews, appointed to the rank of Captain for bravery in the field of action." Father, why don't you speak, are you not glad?

**Uncle J.** It took away my breath so fer a minute that I can hardly speak yet. Our Jim a captain!

**Grace.** Isn't it glorious that we got the news on his birthday. Oh, if he were only here!

**Uncle J.** He shall have a birthday party anyhow, an' when we set down to the table, we will put a chair for Jim. Tell Aunt Debby to invite every one—let them all know of Jim's bravery. *[GRACE kisses him and runs out at R.]*

**Uncle J.** (*rises*). I thank Thee, Father, I, thank Thee. I gave his life into your charge ; guide and protect him.

**Enter MAJOR and BOB at R.**

**Major.** John, I congratulate you. Give me your hand. Our Jim a captain, and for bravery. Oh, I knew all along that he'd do. He ain't had me as a military model all these years for nothin'.

**Bob.** That's right, Major, you have certainly said enough about your fightin' in Mexico.

**Major.** How do you feel about it, John ?

**Uncle J.** Major, I do believe that I'm near pleased to death. Hitch up the horses, Bob, an' drive over in the big sled for Caroline Antwerp, and the rest of the neighbors. You go too, Major, and ask whoever you meet to come here to a feast in honor of Captain James Mathews. Bob, you go call Aunt Debby and then help the Major.

**Bob.** There won't any grass grow under my feet this day.

[BOB **exit** at R.]

**Major.** Nor mine, you can bet your last dollar on that. (*At door, L.*) Captain James Mathews ! Hooray !

[MAJOR **exit** at L. BESSIE *comes in* at R.]

**Bess.** Say, Uncle John, is it true ?

**Uncle J.** It is all true, every word of it. Hurry around, Bess, an' pop some corn. Jim's goin' to have such a birthday as he never had before.

**Bess.** Isn't it just lovely !

[*She takes some popcorn from a string that hangs by the fireplace and shells it in a bowl which she takes from the cupboard. Sound of sleighbells outside. They gradually die away.*]

**Uncle J.** (*goes to window*). There goes the Major. I declare if he hasn't forgotten his tippet. I hope he won't get his ears froze.

**Enter AUNT D. at R.**

**Aunt D.** I knew it ! I told you so ! I knew it all the time. I declare, John, I feel so flustered, I don't know what to do.

**Uncle J.** Then fly around and set out such a feast of your good things as you never set out before. I've sent out the Major to invite the neighbors in, and we must have a supper as will do Captain James Mathews an honor.

**Aunt D.** Well, you just leave that to me. Now sit down, you look nigh excited to death.

**Uncle J.** Well, maybe I do. It ain't every day that a father gets word his son has been made a captain fer bravery on the field of action.



[BOB and GRACE enter at R. GRACE helps UNCLE JOHN to chair before fireplace. BOB and BESSIE kneel before the fire and pop corn. GRACE and AUNT DEBBY set the table. The stage grows dark. GRACE sings "Home, Sweet Home" as she works. AUNT D. lights a candle and sets it before the window. UNCLE JOHN rises and takes a box from the cupboard and brings it over by the fire. He opens it and takes out a baby shoe, a lock of gray hair, and a child's curl.]

**Uncle J.** Grace! (She comes over and kneels beside his chair. Red glow on at fireplace.) Grace, here is Jim's little baby shoe. He dropped the other one in the well down by the barn. And this is one of his baby curls. I mind how bad it made me feel when Debby cut them off. This is a lock of his mother's hair. Oh, if she were only alive to see this day. Maybe she can see us Grace, and is as happy as ourselves. Set this little shoe at Jim's place at the table. The place of my son, Captain James Mathews.

[She kisses the shoe and sets it in a chair at the head of the table. Sound of sleighbells heard. BOB and BESSIE run to the window.]

**Bob.** Here comes the Major with the sled chuck full of people.

**Bess.** There is Caroline Antwerp, and Uncle Bill Gilpert—

**Bob.** An' Deacon Jones an' Allan Dodd. [Bells cease.]

**Uncle J.** Run out and meet them, an' give all a hearty welcome fer Jim's sake.

[BESS, GRACE, and BOB exeunt D. in F.]

**Major (outside).** Whoa there! Pile out, all of you, and give three cheers fer Captain Jim Mathews.

[They all cheer. UNCLE JOHN stands L. C. The guests enter laughing and talking, each wrapped up as for winter.]

**Uncle J. (greeting them).** Howdy, Deacon! How are ye, Caroline, lookin' spruce as ever, I see.

**Caroline.** Oh, now, Uncle John.

[GRACE and AUNT DEBBY assist them to take off the wraps.]

**Uncle J.** Howdy, Allan. How's yer rheumatics?

**Bob.** Hello, Allan!

**Uncle J.** Major, you forgot your tippet. It is a wonder you didn't freeze your ears.

**Major.** If I hadn't been so excited, John, I reckon I would.

**Uncle J.** Come, sit down. Grace, you sit here by me. Caroline, you sit by the Major. Here, Deacon, here by Debby.

[They all sit. UNCLE JOHN and GRACE, C., leaving a vacant chair at the head of the table.]

**Caroline.** And is it true that Jim is a captain?

**Bob** (*who with BESSIE is filling the glasses with cider*). Well, you bet your life.

**Major.** He'll be a major next.

**Uncle J.** Come, now let's drink a health to my son. (*They all rise.*) First let us ask our Father above to help all the wounded an' afflicted, all the loved and loving ones who have been made to suffer through this terrible struggle. (*Pause, they all bow their heads.*) And now let us drink to the health of Captain Mathews.

**Grace.** To our Jim.

**Caroline.** Here's to his birthday.

**Major.** May he be a Colonel.

**Bob.** To his good health.

**Bess.** To his sweetheart.

**Aunt D.** May he escape all danger!

**Uncle J.** And come back safe to those who love him!

[*During the last speeches the sound of sleighbells is heard coming nearer and nearer until they seem to stop at the door. They listen intently with their glasses raised. A knock is heard at the door. BOB opens it.*

**Uncle J.** Somebody is coming late, we will wait for them.

**Bob** (*opening door*). Come in!

*A messenger enters with a telegram which he hands to BOB who gives it to UNCLE JOHN.*

**Uncle J.** Grace, you read it. I haven't got my spectacles.

[*GRACE takes telegram, tears it open, reads it to herself, utters a cry and sinks down by table, her face buried in her hands.*

**Uncle J.** Grace, what is it? What does it say? For God's sake, let me know.

**Grace** (*reading telegram*). "Your son has been mortally wounded, come to him at once."

[*UNCLE JOHN looks bewildered at GRACE, then at the others. He tries to speak, the glass slips from his fingers, he utters a low cry and falls. Picture and*

CURTAIN.

## ACT IV.

Scene.—*Same as the previous acts.*

AUNT DEBBY *discovered knitting by the fireplace.*

BESSIE *enters from R.*

**Aunt D.** And how is Grace this morning?

**Bess.** A great deal better. She told me that as she felt so well, and the day was so bright, she would get up and come out here.

**Aunt D.** It will do her a heap of good. Poor girl, she has had a pretty hard time of it since we got the news about Jim.

**Bess.** And it is just worry about Jim that keeps her sick. I do hope we will get a letter from Uncle John to-day.

**Aunt D.** The mails are very irregular now, Bess, and since they have moved Jim to the hospital at Washington, your Uncle John can't let us know as often as he did. Bob went to the postoffice nigh an hour ago. I wonder what is keepin' him.

**Bess.** Well, if he don't bring back a letter, I'll write one myself. Grace can't live on hope always.

**Aunt D.** I'll make her up a good dose of sage tea and dandelion roots; that does a power of good in the spring.

**Bess.** I don't believe they will touch her case, Aunt Debby. She needs a remedy named "Jim." I am goin' to make her some toast and a cup of tea now, an' when she comes out here, you just try to cheer her up all you can.

**Aunt D.** I will, Bessie.

**Bess.** And let her talk about Jim just as much as she wants to. [Exit BESSIE at L.]

**Aunt D.** I don't know of a subject that could come nigher to the hearts of any of us. Poor Grace, an' poor Jim.

[She wipes her eyes.]

**Enter the MAJOR and BOB, D. in F.**

**Bob.** Here we are.

**Major.** Good-morning, Debby!

**Aunt D.** (*rising, and taking his hand*). Well, Major! I am glad to see you!

**Bob.** I thought you'd be, leastwise I told him so. I've been gone a good while, Aunt Debby, but you'll have to lay the blame on the Major. He insisted on coming with me, an' you know how slow he gets over ground with that game leg of his.

**Aunt D.** Now, Bob, I think the Major is real spry. How d'ye feel this morning, Major?

**Major.** Jist like a yearlin' colt, Debby!

**Aunt D.** Any letters, Bob?

**Bob.** Yes, one for you. (*He hands her the letter. She gets her spectacles from the cupboard.*) I met old screw-eyed Tidd at the postoffice, an' he told me he'd be out here to see us to-day. He didn't say it very pleasant, either.

**Aunt D.** I wonder what he wants out here? I haven't seen him in three months. I don't trade in his store any more, an' he hasn't been to church for a power of a time. I'm afraid he's clean backslid. (*Opens the letter.*) It is from your Uncle John.

**Major.** May I hear it, Debby?

**Aunt D.** Of course. You are just like one of the family, Major.

**Major.** Thankee, Debby.

**Bob.** If you'd like to be any closer related, Major, there is a chance for you.

**Aunt D.** You be quiet now, Bob.

**Bob.** I'm mum. Go on with the letter.

**Aunt D.** (*reads.*) "I don't know when I will be able to bring Jimmy home, for the doctors have decided that to-morrow he will have to undergo a dangerous operation which may result in his death. He is very low at present, and I fear for the worst, but will let you know of any change at once. Will write again to-morrow."

**Major.** Poor John, he is worried nigh to death.

**Bob.** Is that all, Aunt Debby?

**Aunt D.** Every word. (*She drops the letter and begins to cry.*) Oh, why did we let Jim go away: I know that we will never see him again.

**Major.** Poor Debby!

[*He tries to comfort her.*]

**Bob** (*picks up the letter*). Why, this letter was written nearly three weeks ago.

**Major.** Three weeks ago!

**Bob.** Yes. It has been delayed somewhere.

**Aunt D.** An' Jim may be dead by this time. Oh, what will I do?

[*Sits at R. and weeps.*]

**Bob.** Don't screech for one thing. Do you want Grace to hear you?

**Major.** Yes, we must keep this news from her. Besides, if Jim was dead John would be home by this time. We may get good news on the next train.

**Bob.** And we won't have long to wait.

**Major.** So don't worry, Debby.

**Bob.** Don't talk to her, Major. She wouldn't be happy unless she was miserable.

**Aunt D.** I just know that Jim has passed away. I dreamed of a wedding last night, and that is a sure sign of death.

**Bob.** Did you really dream of a wedding, Aunt Debby?

**Aunt D.** Yes, Bob.

**Bob.** And is it a sure sign?

**Aunt D.** Yes, Bob.

**Bob.** I don't believe it!

*[He wipes his eyes on his coat-sleeve, and goes up to the window.]*

**Enter BESSIE from L. with a tray of tea and toast.**

**Bessie.** Good-morning, father. What is the matter, Aunt Debby? *(She sets the tray upon the table and crosses R. to her.)* Have you got some bad news? Oh, you are all crying! Is Jim dead? Why don't some of you tell me?

*[GRACE calls outside at R.]*

**Grace.** I am coming, Bessie!

**Bess.** She will find it out! It will kill her!

**Bob.** She must not know it. We will all laugh! *(He tries to laugh but ends with a sob.)* Come on, laugh! Take up your knitting, Aunt Debby, just as if nothing had happened. Bess, you tend to your toast. Major, you tell us a funny story!

*[All make a dismal attempt at laughing.]*

**Aunt D. (crying).** Oh, Bob, how can I laugh?

**Bob (goes to door R. and calls).** Gracie!

**Grace (outside).** Yes, Bob!

**Bob.** Come on in, we want to see you. The Major is tellin' us a lot of funny stories, and we are near bustin' with laughin'.

**Enter GRACE at R.**

**Major (tenderly taking her hand).** Howdy do, Grace. Feelin' better to-day?

*[BOB places a chair for her at L. She sits.]*

**Grace.** Much better, Major. *(AUNT D. crosses to GRACE and strokes her hair gently.)* Good-morning, Aunt Debby. *(Kisses her.)* How bright you all look. I think we must all feel better because we are going to hear good news of Jim to-day.

*[AUNT D. and BESS wipe their eyes; BOB coughs and goes up to the window; MAJOR examines the things on the mantelpiece.]*

**Major.** I hope that we will, Grace.

**Grace.** I have dressed myself in white, Jim always liked this dress. Now, don't think that I am foolish, Major; but last night I dreamed that Uncle John had brought Jim home to us. Have you been to the postoffice, Bob?

**Bob.** Yes, Grace!

*[He comes down to C.]*

**Grace.** Did you get any letters?

**Bob** (*hesitates*). N-no, Grace. [*He exit quickly D. in F*]

**Major** (*crosses to GRACE*). Don't fret on that account, little girl, for we may get news on the later train. You see we hardly ever get mail on the early train because—well—and—— I guess I will go out an' see what Bob is doin'.

[*He exit D. in F. BESSIE goes up to the window.*]

**Grace.** What is the matter with Bob and the Major?

**Bess.** I guess Bob wanted to get to work, I see him out in the onion-bed pullin' weeds like fury. (*Comes down to GRACE.*) Would you like more tea, Gracie?

**Grace.** No, thank, you, Bessie.

**Bess.** Then I'll take it out in the kitchen. You sit here with Aunt Debby till I come back.

**Grace.** Then we will go down by the spring where the violets grow. I want to pick some, for Jim is so fond of them.

**Bess.** And I know a place that is just blue with flowers. I'll be right back, Grace. You take good care of her, Aunt Debby. [*Exit BESSIE L.*]

**Grace.** I'm an awful lot of trouble to you, Aunt Debby.

**Aunt D.** Not one bit! I don't know what we would do without you. You must promise me to make this your home always.

**Grace.** Yes, Aunt Debby. I don't believe that Jim would want to leave his father, even after we are married.

**Aunt D.** No, Grace. [*Kisses her.*]

**Grace.** You have been so kind to me. I never knew my own father and mother, they died when I was so very young; when I came here to teach the school, I was just out of school myself, and had always lived among strangers; but I am sure that my own father could not have been dearer to me than Uncle John, and no mother could do more for me than you have done.

**Aunt D.** It is all because we love you, Grace.

**Grace.** Then I met Jim and he—loved me too. I don't believe I ever knew how much I cared for him until he went away. I think I should have died, if he had died, but I know that he will be back to me soon; then how happy we will be.

**Aunt D.** Yes, Grace dear. [*Sighs.*]

**Grace** (*rises and goes up to the window*). How bright it is to-day; the first real warm day of sunshine we have had.

**Aunt D.** Yes, the spring was late this year.

**Grace.** Just a year ago to-day Jim went away. Oh, Aunt Debby, what if he should come back to-day—this very day.

**Aunt D.** It seems almost too good to hope for, Grace.

**Grace.** Nothing is too good to hope for, Aunt Debby.

**Enter BESSIE at L.**

**Bess.** I am ready, Grace. I've brought your hat and shawl. The day is just glorious.

**Grace.** We will pick a bunch of violets for Jim's room, and one for Uncle John's, for they might come back to-day, Bess.

**Bess** (*sadly*). Yes, Grace.

**Grace.** I am ready, now. Come on, Bessie.

**Aunt D.** Take good care of her, Bessie. Keep your shawl close about you and don't tire yourself out.

**Grace.** I won't, I am going to try and get the roses back into my cheeks, so that Jim won't miss them. Good-bye, Aunt Debby. **[Exit GRACE and BESSIE, D. in F.]**

**Aunt D.** Poor girl, an' Jim may be dead. Oh, what suffering this struggle has brought to every woman both in the north and south. The men have the *glory*, but we women have the *pain*. **[Takes up her knitting and sits at R.]**

**Enter BOB at R.**

**Bob.** Has Grace gone?

**Aunt D.** Yes, Bob.

**Bob** (*comes down L. to her.*). Now, Aunt Debby, don't worry any more than you can help. I know that I sometimes near torment the life out of you, but it is not because I don't like you, it is just my pure cussedness. I'm a-goin' to ask you to forgive me, Aunt Debby, an' I'm goin' to promise to try an' do better.

**Aunt D.** Bob, I never did hold any malice towards you, an' as soon as you've done some aggravatin' thing, I forgive you. I've been real mean an' hateful myself, sometimes, an' I expect, tryin'?

**Bob.** No, Aunt Debby, you are just the next thing to an angel, and I'm going to give you a good hug.

**[He embraces her.]**

**Aunt D.** Oh, Bob Mathews, you near took the breath out of me.

**Bob.** Aunt Debby, while Uncle John is away, I am the man of the house. From the way Deacon Tidd looked at me when he said he was coming out here, I reckoned he means to do something unpleasant.

**Aunt D.** What could he do, Bob?

**Bob.** I don't know; but just before Jim went away—(**AUNT DEBBY** *wipes her eyes*)—Deacon Tidd was here, an' he an' grandpa had some kind of a row. I don't know what it was about, but I kind of guess his comin' out here to-day has some-  
thin' to do with that.

**Aunt D.** What could it be?

**Bob.** I don't know, an' I don't know as I'd tell you if I did know. Now if Deacon Tidd acts mean to-day, you just call me, and—I'll fire him out.

**Aunt D.** Why, Bob!

**Bob.** Yes, an' John Henry, too, if he comes along.

**Aunt D.** Now, Bob, don't you get into any quarrel with Deacon Tidd!

**Bob.** Not unless he tries to do any funny business. The Major thinks that something is in the wind, an' he is going to stay until it is all over. When I came in, I saw Deacon Tidd driving up the lane, so we won't be long findin' out what he wants. (*Goes up to door R.*) Now you just let him say his say,—*then call on me!*

[**Exit BOB, R.**]

**Aunt D.** Well, if he's comin' I'd better put on a clean apron. The Deacon was always peculiar, but I don't see what he can have against us. We don't owe him anything! (**DEACON TIDD** *knocks at D. in F.*, **AUNT DEBBY** *opens it.* **The DEACON enters**). Good-morning, Deacon!

**Deacon.** Good-morning!

**Aunt D.** Fine weather we are havin'. Sit down, an' let me take your hat.

[**DEACON sits.**]

**Deacon.** No, thank you, I can hold it where it is.

**Aunt D.** How's all your folks?

**Deacon.** Fair. How's yours?

**Aunt D.** Pretty well. Grace, she is right peart this mornin'. She's gone out for a walk.

**Deacon.** It does seem to me as though you always had a power of people hangin' around. It must take an awful sight of money to feed so many.

**Aunt D.** I guess we don't begrudge it. John always thinks of them as his own children.

**Deacon.** Is John to home yet?

**Aunt D.** No, he ain't come back.

**Deacon.** When do you expect him?

**Aunt D.** We ain't heard.

**Deacon.** Well, he'd better come home an' tend to business.

**Aunt D.** And leave Jim alone, sick, and maybe nigh unto death, among strangers? That ain't the kind of a father John Mathews is.

**Deacon.** Well, I've got a little business to settle with him, and as he ain't here, I guess you are the one to talk to.

**Aunt D.** What is it, Deacon?

**Deacon.** A year ago to-day, John gave me a mortgage on this land. The time is up to-day. I suppose he left you the money to settle it.

**Aunt D.** A mortgage! Why, Deacon Tidd, what are you talkin' about?



**Deacon.** Business! Here are the papers. You can see them yourself.

**Aunt D.** John mortgage his home! The place where Jim was born, an' where his wife died and lies buried!

**Deacon.** Yes, and the money is due to-day. Can you settle it?

**Aunt D.** I don't know anything about this, Deacon.

**Deacon.** Well, I do. Business is business, an' if the mortgage an' interest are not paid, you'll have to go, that's all. If I've got to take the land, I want it in time to put in the spring crops.

**Aunt D.** It's in, every seed! Bob Mathews tended to that.

**Deacon.** Then maybe I can give John Henry Tidd a chance to take care of it.

**Aunt D.** Deacon Tidd, I just dare you to——

**Deacon.** There is no use gettin' mad, Debby. I've got the law on my side, an' I know what I'm talkin' about.

**Aunt D.** (*rises*). Well, I just dare you to try and put me off this place.

**Deacon.** I can do it! Every kith an kin of ye!

**Aunt D.** And I can put you off. You don't own this farm yet, and this day ain't over yet, and at least till it is, I am the boss. (*She goes to door in flat and opens it.*) Now, you git!

**Deacon** (*rises*). Debby, don't you dare to threaten me!

**Aunt D.** An' don't you dare to threaten me, or I'll take the broom to you. Don't fancy that I am alone and unprotected. (*Calls at door R.*) Major! Bob! Come here!

**Deacon.** Now don't let us have any fuss. I don't want to have no fuss.

**Enter MAJOR and BOB, R.**

**Aunt D.** (C). Now, I want you two to witness that I ask that man there to leave peaceably and quietly. If he don't go, I'll take this broom to him! [*She takes up the broom.*]

**Deacon.** And I want both of you to witness that she threatened me.

**Aunt D.** You go before I count five! *One!*

**Deacon.** You'll regret this!

**Aunt D.** *Two!*

**Bob.** Count faster, Aunt Debby!

**Aunt D.** *Three!*

**Major.** I guess you'd better go, Deacon. I think she means business.

**Aunt D.** *Four!*

**Deacon.** I'll be back with the sheriff! I'll see if a man can be treated like this on his own grounds!

**Aunt D.** *Five!* [*She starts for the DEACON, who hurriedly exit D. in F.*]

**Bob.** Why didn't you whack him one !

**Aunt D.** Bob, you mind your own business. (*She sinks in chair L., and bursts into tears.*) Oh, Major ! Major !

**Major.** What in the world is the matter, Debby !

**Aunt D.** Oh, this is too much !

**Bob.** What did he say, Aunt Debby ?

**Aunt D.** You go out and let me talk to the Major.

**Bob.** But, Aunt Debby——

**Aunt D.** Go on, Bob, or I'll count five for you !

**Bob.** Well, I don't think it's right, but I'll go.

[**Exit BOB D. in F.**

**Major.** Now, Debby, what is this all about ?

**Aunt D.** Major, that Deacon Tidd has gone and got a mortgage on this farm for five hundred dollars.

**Major.** You don't say !

**Aunt D.** I do say ! I saw it ! It is due to-day, and John drew every cent of money from the bank when he went to Jimmy. Oh, I don't know what to do.

**Major.** And I haven't got that much money in the world, or you could have it in a minute.

**Aunt D.** He threatens to turn us out to-day.

**Major.** I don't believe he can do that, Debby.

**Aunt D.** What will we do ? (*Rises.*) John's heart is just bound up in this home. Oh, I am so miserable.

**Major** (*holding out his arms*). Cry it out here, Debby ! (*Embraces her.*) I've got my place left. It ain't worth much, but whatever I've got, you may share—every one of you.

**Aunt D.** Why, Major, what would people say ?

**Major.** What could they say, when you were—(*gasps*)—my wife !

**Aunt D.** Your wife ? Oh, Major !

[*Hides her face bashfully.*

**Major.** There now, I've said it, and I've been wantin' to say it for nigh onto five years. Will you have me, Debby ?

**Aunt D.** And I've been wantin' you to say it for nigh onto five years. Yes, I'll have you, Major !

**Major.** There now !

[*Kisses her.*

CAROLINE ANTWERP enters D. in F.

**Caroline.** Ahem !

[*Turns her back on them.*

**Major** (*embarrassed*). Howdy, Caroline !

**Aunt D.** Come right in, Caroline.

**Caroline** (*snappishly*). I hope I don't intrude ?

**Aunt D.** Oh, no. Does she, Major ?

**Major.** Not at all, Debby.

**Caroline.** I didn't know, but as I came in—

**Major.** You were mistaken, Caroline.

**Caroline.** Well, maybe I was, but I don't think so.

**Major** (*going up to D. in F.*). I guess I'll go out to the barn. You'll excuse me, Caroline?

**Caroline.** Oh, I can, if Debby can.

**Aunt D.** Oh, I guess I can.

[**Exit MAJOR, D. in F.**]

**Caroline.** Well, Deborah Mathews!

**Aunt D.** Well, Caroline?

**Caroline.** Debby, I'm ashamed of you.

**Aunt D.** What do you mean, Caroline Antwerp?

**Caroline.** What did I see when I came in?

**Aunt D.** You ought to know better than me.

**Caroline.** Debby Mathews, I saw you kiss him.

**Aunt D.** Well, an' what if I did?

**Caroline.** It was bold and unmaidenly of you.

**Aunt D.** But it would be all right, I suppose, if he had kissed you. For my part, I don't see anything wrong in a woman kissin' the man she is going to marry.

**Caroline.** What!

**unt D.** (*calmly*). Don't faint, Caroline.

**Caroline** (*spitefully*). So you've caught him at last after trying all these years.

**Aunt D.** Yes, Caroline, and after all these years of tryin' you have failed to catch him.

**Caroline.** Do you mean to say——

**Aunt D.** Them as the shoe pinches can wear it.

**Caroline.** Well, all I've got to say is that you'll repent your gain.

**Aunt D.** Maybe I will, but that is my lookout.

**Caroline.** And you ought to be ashamed to accept a proposal the very day your nephew lies dead.

**Aunt D.** Jim, dead!

**Caroline.** Yes, dead!

**Aunt D.** Caroline, where did you hear that?

**Caroline.** I saw it in the "Putnam Herald." (*She takes a newspaper from her reticule.*) Here it is. (*Reads.*) The following is the list of dead this morning in the Military Hospital at Washington. See here is his name the third on the list. Captain James Mathews of—— (*AUNT DEBBY falls in chair R.*). Don't faint, Debby.

[*Throws her paper on table R., and takes AUNT DEBBY'S arm.*]

**Aunt D.** Dead—our Jim! Oh, how shall I ever bear it? How can I tell Grace?

**Caroline.** Forgive me, Debby. I thought you knew of it. I know that I am cranky and mean, but I never would a' done this.

**Enter** BOB, D. *in F.*

**Bob.** It's about time for the train, Aunt Debby. I'm goin' to drive down and see if there is any mail.

**Aunt D.** It is of no use, Bob. Jim is dead.

**Bob.** Who told you that?

**Caroline.** I read it in the paper.

**Bob.** I don't believe it! I won't believe it. I won't believe anything until we hear from Uncle John. I'm going for the mail!

**Caroline.** May I ride back to town with you, Bob?

**Bob.** If you are not afraid to ride fast, for I'm going to drive like — blazes. Things have got pretty well mixed up here, and some one has got to straighten 'em out.

[**Exit** BOB and CAROLINE, D. *in F.*

**Aunt D.** Jim dead! How will I ever tell Grace. Oh, Merciful Father, how could you take our little Jim from us?

**Enter** GRACE, D. *in F.*

**Grace.** Aunt Debby, see what a big bunch of violets I found. The sunshine has brought new life to me. Jim won't miss my rosy cheeks after all.

**Aunt D.** No, Grace. [*Helps GRACE off with her hat and shawl.*

**Grace** (*sits in chair by the table*). I believe that I am just a bit tired after all. Bessie and I were down by the spring where Jim first told me—that he cared for me. I could shut my eyes and almost fancy I heard him say again—"I—love—you." (*Sighs.*) Has Bob gone for the mail?

**Aunt D.** No, Grace dear.

**Grace.** We will surely get some word to-day. Some word that will make us all very happy.

**Aunt D.** But if it should be bad news, Grace?

**Grace.** It won't be, Aunt Debby. I am sure of it.

**Aunt D.** (*aside*). Oh, I can't tell her, I can't. (*Aloud.*) I'll get a vase for your flowers, Grace. Sit here, dear, until I come back. (*Goes to door R.*) Poor girl, poor girl! [**Exit at R.**

**Grace.** I cannot think that bad news will come to-day. (*Takes up the flowers.*) Violets! How Jim does love them; he likes to see me wear them too. I will pin a bunch here at my throat; then if he should come back to-day— (*Sees paper on the table.*) Here is a newspaper, the first I have seen in weeks. (*Takes it up.*) This will bring sorrow to more than one loving heart. What is this? "List of dead and wounded." What a world of misery lies in those few words. "Caleb Jones, Private Frederick Lee." My God! What is this? "Captain James Mathews, of— That is Jim's name, here among the dead!

No, no! it is not true! I cannot believe it! (*Rises.*) Aunt Debby! Bessie! No! I won't believe it! [*Falls.*]

**Enter BESSIE D. in F.**

**Bess.** Did you call, Grace? (*Sees her.*) Grace, what is the matter? Grace, look at me! Speak to me! Aunt Debby, come quick, Grace is dead!

**Enter MAJOR and DEBBY at R.**

**Major.** What is the matter, Bessie?

**Aunt D.** (*kneels by GRACE and takes the paper from her hand.*) She has learned the truth!

**Bess.** The truth?

**Aunt D.** Jim is dead!

[*They place GRACE in the chair R., a knock at the door is heard.*]

**Bess.** Who is there?

**JIM enters D. in F., he is very pale, the sleeve of his right arm is empty and pinned on his breast.**

**Jim.** Aunt Debby, don't you know me?

**Aunt D.** Is it Jim? [*With a cry of joy.*]

**Major.** Hush! A sudden joy can kill, they say.

**oim.** What do you mean?

**Major** (*points to chair*). Grace is there!

**Jim** (*seeing her*). Grace! [*Kneels by the chair.*]

**Grace** (*reviving*). And he will not come back to me.

**Jim.** What does she mean?

**Major.** We heard that you were dead. Bessie, tell her that Jim is here, then leave them together.

[*JIM goes up stage. AUNT D. and MAJOR exeunt R.*]

**Grace** (*to BESS who kneels beside her*). I thought I heard his voice—but no, they said that he is dead.

**Bess.** Grace, dear Grace, suppose the news was not true!

**Grace.** Not true?

**Bess.** That Jim would come back to-day!

**Grace.** That Jim would come back to me?

**Bess.** That he is here!

[*BESSIE exit R.*]

**Grace.** Here!

[*She rises.*]

**Jim** (*comes quickly down and clasps her in his arms*). Grace, I am here!

**Grace.** Jim! Is it really you? Oh, my dear love, they told me that you were dead.

**Jim.** No, I am here. Safe with you at last. All here but—

[*He points to his empty sleeve.*]

**Grace.** Oh, my poor boy! My poor Jim!

**Enter** UNCLE J. and BOB, D. in F.

**Uncle J.** Grace, I brought him back to you.

**Grace.** Father! [*She kisses him.*]

**Enter from R.,** MAJOR, AUNT D. and BESS.

**Major.** Howdy do, John!

**Uncle J.** Howdy do, Major. [*They shake hands warmly.*]

**Bob.** Bessie, give me a kiss. I'm full of joy to the explodin' point. [*She kisses him.*]

**Major.** Debby, do likewise.

**Aunt D.** Oh, Major! [*They embrace.*]

**Major.** Bess, here is your new mother!

**Bess.** New? She's been a real mother to me ever since I can remember.

**BILL TIDD enters** D. in F.

**Bill.** May I come in?

**Jim.** It's Bill. Come in, Bill.

**Aunt D.** Well, Bill Tidd, of all people. Well, I am powerful glad to see you! [*Shakes his hands warmly.*]

**Jim.** Grace, this is my friend. He lay almost dying, in the cot next to mine, but father recognized him——

**Bill.** And saved my worthless life.

**Uncle J.** Not worthless, Bill.

**Bill.** Not if anything I can do in the future will atone for my past.

**Enter** DEACON TIDD and JOHN HENRY D. in F.

**Deacon** (*as he enters*). Now, Debby Mathews, I'll show you what the law can do.

**Uncle J.** Howdy, Deacon! On hand prompt, I see.

**Bill.** Father! [*Starts toward him.*]

**Deacon.** You here, you thief!

**Grace.** Deacon!

**Uncle J.** Don't call hard names, Deacon. Bill has been nigh to the point of death and has begun life anew.

**Deacon.** Nigh to death?

**Bill.** Yes, father.

**John H.** Bill, father called you a thief just now; but I never told on you, I never said a word. [*BILL takes his hand.*]

**Bill.** But I have. Father, I took that money, not Jim.

**Deacon.** You!

**Bill.** Yes. I do not ask you to forgive me, until I prove to you that I mean to live as a man should. Give me that paper.

[*He takes the mortgage paper from the DEACON'S hands and tears it into bits.*]

**Deacon.** How dare you?

**Bill.** That is my first step towards the better life I mean to lead—one of honesty. I will pay you the money back, every penny of it, and there is my hand.

**Deacon.** And when you have paid it, I will give you my hand, and not before. [*Exeunt DEACON and JOHN H., D. in F.*]

**Uncle J.** Here is mine now.

**Major.** And mine!

**Jim.** And mine! It is the left one, Bill; but I gave my right to my country.

**Grace.** My poor Jim.

**Uncle J.** No, Grace. Others have given their lives without a murmur. We should thank the Father of us all for bringing back to us——

**Grace.** Our Jim!

CURTAIN.



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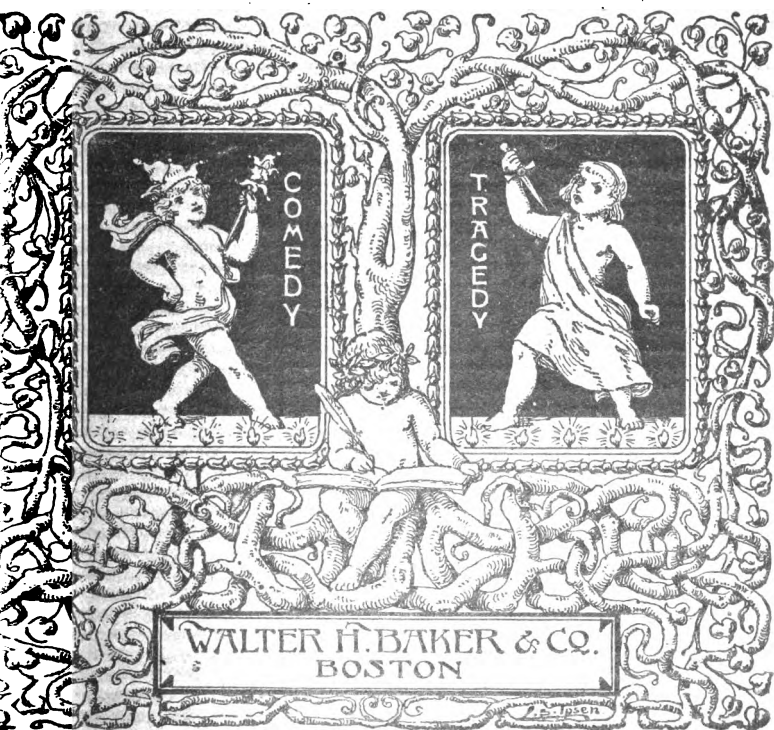
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3  
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# BAKER'S EDITION OF PLAYS

## OUR JIM



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# "OUR JIM"

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

EGBERT W. FOWLER

AUTHOR OF "A MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT"

---

BOSTON

*Walter H. Baker & Co.*

1897



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## “OUR JIM.”

### CHARACTERS.

JOHN MATHEWS, *called “Uncle John” by all his friends.*

JAMES MATHEWS, *his son.*

BOB, *his nephew.*

MAJOR TIMOTHY MUDGE.

DEACON HEZEKIAH TIDD.

BILL TIDD,

JOHN HENRY TIDD, } *his sons.*

AUNT DEBORAH MATHEWS.

CAROLINE ANTWERP.

BESSIE, *the Major’s daughter.*

GRACE ANTWERP.

SCENE.—A farm-house near Lexington, Ohio.

TIME.—1861, just preceding the Civil War.



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### SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.—“My country, ’tis of thee.”

ACT II.—“The girl I left behind me.”

ACT III.—“From Atlanta to the sea.”

ACT IV.—“When Johnny comes marching home.”



## "OUR JIM."

### ACT I.

**Scene.**—*The interior of a country barn. Open doors at back, showing meadows in the distance. Two stalls at L. with harness and saddles hanging upon the pegs. Rope tied to stall, the end lying across the stage. Hay scattered about. Bench and three-legged stool down at L. At R. a loft built about ten feet above stage, with a ladder down to C. Music at curtain.*

AUNT DEBORAH *discovered at the foot of the ladder.*

**Aunt D.** (*calling to BOB in the loft above*). Bob! that speckled Plymouth Rock hen lays over there to the right under the eaves. (*She crosses to bench and sits fanning herself with her sun-bonnet.*) Laws-a-me, it do beat all how she manages to git up there. It allers did appear to me that hens wuz the contrariest things alive. (*Calls.*) Can ye find 'em, Bob?

**Bob** (*appearing at the top of the ladder with his hat full of eggs*). Yep!

**Aunt D.** Then hurry down, fer I've got to get back to my cake. (*BOB starts down the ladder.*) Be careful and don't break any. Hurry up, fer I've got all the tables to set before the company comes. Yer Uncle John has invited all the neighbors in to a farewell dinner to Jimmy before he leaves with his regiment.

**Bob.** I wisht I wuz goin' along!

[*He helps AUNT DEBORAH put the eggs into a basket.*]

**Annt D.** Where is yer Uncle John?

**Bob.** Him and Jimmy's up to the house talkin'.

**Aunt D.** You'd better put things to rights here, Bob, fer I know the young folks will want to have a reel or a piller dance or something of the kind.

**Bob.** Ye kin just bet we will!

**Aunt D.** Now, Bob, if you promise to behave yerself to-day, I'll give you the batter that is left in the cake crock.

**Bob.** I'm a-goin' to behave.

**Aunt D.** Honest now, Bob?

**Bob.** I'll cross my heart and body!

**Aunt D.** Now don't fergit. Hurry up an' fix things here, an' then come to the kitchen. I'm a-goin' to give you a hot turn-over in the bargain.

**Bob.** Aunt Debby, you're a peach! (*She starts for the door c. BOB picks up the end of the rope and runs before her. She trips and falls.*) Jeminy Christmas, I'll catch it now!

[*He runs up the ladder.*]

**Aunt D.** Bob Mathews, you did that a purpose! (*Gets up.*) Come right down here now, I'll teach you to trip me up.

**Bob.** I didn't do it on purpose, Aunt Debby; I'll swear to goodness that it was an accident.

**Aunt D.** I'll teach you to be more careful in the future. Come down, Bob.

**Bob.** That's what Davy Crockett said to the coon.

**Aunt D.** Come down, I say!

**Bob.** Thank you, Aunt Debby, but I'm very comfortable where I am.

**Aunt D.** Bob Mathews, come right down here! You deserve a good thrashin'. Them eggs are all broke, an' Caroline Antwerp comin' to dinner. She's just sure to brag up her cook-in' higher 'an mine. Come here, Bob!

**Bob.** No, I'll be d — hanged if I do!

**Aunt D.** Ye won't come down?

**Bob.** No!

**Aunt D.** Then I'll come up after you.

[*She starts up the ladder, BOB runs back into the loft. When she gets up he slides down one of the supports and takes away the ladder.*]

**Bob.** Now, Aunt Debby, you'll have to jump.

**Enter** UNCLE JOHN at C,

**Uncle J.** What's all this?

**Aunt D.** Why, he——

**Bob.** Why, she——

**Aunt D.** Bob's been aggravatin' the life outen me.

**Bob.** She wanted to thrash me 'cause I tripped her up.

**Uncle J.** Bob, you be quiet an' let yer Aunt Debby speak.

**Aunt D.** I want to get down.

**Bob.** Well, jump down then.

**Uncle J.** Put up the ladder, Robert.

[*BOB replaces the ladder, and AUNT DEBBY descends, speaking as she comes.*]

**Aunt D.** He went and tripped me up with a rope, an' smashed all my eggs, an' my cakes are in the oven burnin', an' that spiteful Caroline Antwerp here to dinner, an' not an egg to make a custard pie. (*Reaches stage.*) An' Bob swore!

**Bob.** I know a darn sight better. I only said I'd be hanged if I did.

**Uncle J. (*reprovingly*).** Robert!

**Aunt D.** An' he got me up there, then took away the ladder. I just know my cakes are burned an' everything gone wrong, an' not an egg to make a custard pie.

**Bob.** An' Major Mudge is so fond of custard pie.

**Uncle J. (*taking up the basket*).** Here are your eggs, Deborah, an' only one broken.

**Bob.** There now!

**Aunt D. (*taking basket*).** Well, it's a wonder; but if them cakes are burned, Bob Mathews, I'll never forgive ye.

[AUNT DEBORAH **exit** C.]

**Uncle J.** Bob, I'm ashamed of ye. Why do you pester your Aunt Debby this way? Ain't you kind of ashamed of yourself?

**Bob.** Yes, I am, Uncle John; but she does rile me so sometimes, that I think I'll surely bust.

**Uncle J.** I expect you bother her a good deal too, Bob. Now I want you to promise me that you'll try your best to do all you can to make your Aunt Debby happy. You know she's gittin' old. She does an awful lot for you, Bob.

**Bob.** I know it, Uncle John, an' I will try; but it seems to me I jist get so filled up sometimes with devilishness, that if I don't let off steam by worryin' somebody, I'll explode. But I'm goin' to turn over a new leaf, Uncle John, an' right now.

**Uncle J.** That's right, Bob, an' see how long you can keep it clean.

**Bob.** I'll go now an' shell the peas fer dinner. That will kind of square me an' Aunt Debby, won't it?

**Uncle J.** I think it will, Bob. (**Exit** BOB *at* C.) Bob is just so full of the old Harry, that it is mighty hard work fer him to keep outen mischief. I wish that Debby could see him as I do. I'm afraid his city trainin' wasn't just the best he might 'a' had. His poor mother died when he was so young, and his father was too busy to take much care of him, so Bob was left to do about as he pleased. I think he'll come out all right though, an' I expect him to be my right hand when Jim is gone away.

**Enter** BESSIE *at* C.

**Bess. (*excitedly*).** Uncle John, the folks have begun to come, an' Aunt Debby says fer you to come up to the house right away.

**Uncle J.** All right. Who has come?

**Bess.** The Carter family, an' Hez Smith's folks. Kate Smith's got a new pink dress. Deacon Tidd an' John Henry drove up just as I started here, an' say, Uncle John, can't we young people have the barn fur a dance or two?

**Uncle J.** Well, Bessie, I guess there ain't anything to interfere. Sail in an' have as good a time as you can.

**Bess.** Oh, it's awfully good of you to let us. (*She runs up to the door.*) Come on, Bob! He says we can! Come on quick. (*Runs down to C., and throws her arms about his neck.*) Oh, you dear, good, jolly Uncle John!

**Uncle J.** (*stoops and kisses her*). There, child, now don't explode!

**Bess.** I'll try not to, Uncle John; but I'll have to try mighty hard.

**Uncle J.** Remember, Bessie, that to-day we are to bid good-bye to the brothers and husbands who are going to fight for the Union. Some of them may never return. We should think of that, little girl,

**Bess.** But Jim will come back, Uncle John. I know he won't get hurt.

**Uncle J.** I hope he will come back, Bessie, and we must all pray that Heaven will see fit to spare him for us.

[Exit UNCLE JOHN, C.]

**Bess.** Of course he'll come back. No one would dare to hurt our Jim. Why don't Bob come? (*Runs to door C., and calls.*) Bobbie! There he is, talkin' to that hateful Kate Smith. I'll never give Bob Mathews my share of pie again. Here comes John Henry Tidd. I guess I can show Mr. Bob that I don't care for him nohow.

**Enter JOHN HENRY, C.** *He sees BESSIE and turns to go away.*

**Bess.** Helloa, John Henry!

**John H.** (*bashfully*). Hello, Bess!

**Bess.** Come to Uncle John's dinner? [*Sits on bench.*]

**John H.** Yep!

**Bess.** Any of your folks goin' to the war?

**John H.** Nope. Any of yourn?

**Bess.** Yep. Jimmy's goin'.

**John H.** Wonder ef he'll git shot?

**Bess.** Why, John Henry Tidd, ain't you ashamed of yourself?

**John H.** Nope. Fer he might you know.

**Bess.** Why did you an' your papa come for, if any of your folks ain't goin'?

**John H.** My dad's got the money that wuz give to the regiment. What do you call it? The do——

**Bess.** The donation. I wuz to one at the minister's once.

**John H.** So wuz I. I ate eleven doughnuts,

**Bess.** You pig! I never in my whole life ate more 'an seven at one time.

**John H.** Dad's goin to give the money to 'em to-day. He's goin' to make a speech too.

**Bess.** Is he?

**John H.** Yep. He's been practisin' in the barn fer a week. It begins, "Friends, Feller Citizens, an' Warriors for the Cause."

**Bess.** I'll bet Uncle John could make a better one.

**John H.** Mebbe he could; but dad's speech is a corker. (*Takes an apple from his pocket and offers it to her.*) Want a bite of apple?

**BOB enters C. ; he sees JOHN HENRY and stands listening.**

**Bess.** Gimme half.

**Bob** (*divides apple*). I think you're a heap sight prettier 'an Kate Smith.

**Bess.** Oh, go 'long now! (*She sees BOB.*) I think you're right pretty—fer a boy.

**Bob** (*coming forward*). Yes, he's a bird, ain't he! (*To JOHN HENRY.*) You long-legged combination of a jack-knife and a clothes-pin, get out of here, or I'll smash you one!

**John H.** Well, maybe you think you can!

**Bob.** I come mighty near bein' sure of it. I'd just like to try it a while any way. [*He throws off his coat and makes for JOHN HENRY.*]

**John H.** (*backing away*). Now stop!

**Bob.** Knock that chip off my shoulder. I dare you to.

**Bess.** Now, you boys just stop. (*They get to fight.*) Stop! or I'll call Uncle John!

[*The boys scuffle ; UNCLE JOHN enters at C., walks down and takes each by the collar.*]

**Uncle J.** Now ain't ye ashamed of yourselves? Bob, I'm ashamed of you! (*Shakes him.*) John Henry, I'm ashamed of you! (*Shakes JOHN HENRY.*) You two look for all the world like a bantam rooster and a big Shanghai. (*Shakes both boys.*) Now put on your coats and don't let me see any more such actions, or I'll trounce the two of you. (*Lets them go.*) It appears to me as though a love fer fightin' was penetratin' the systems of everybody.

[*He goes up stage. BOB and JOHN HENRY stoop to pick up their coats, and each fancies the other is about to strike. They turn again to fight. UNCLE JOHN comes down.*]

**Uncle J.** What were you boys doin'?

**Bob.** Giving a parting salute, Uncle John.

**Uncle J.** Well, let it be the last, or I'll give you both a broadside with the palm of my hand,

GRACE enters C.

**Grace.** Here we are, Uncle John, and we are going to dance the Virginia reel. [*Music, piano.*]

[**Enter at C.** JIM, AUNT DEBORAH, DEACON TIDD, CAROLINE ANTWERP, *and the guests as many as desired.* GRACE and JIM stand L., AUNT DEBORAH, CAROLINE ANTWERP and DEACON TIDD R., MAJOR MUDGE and UNCLE JOHN C., BOB, BESSIE and JOHN H. at back. *The guests group about.\**]

**Major.** Select your partners! (*He crosses to R.*) Will you allow me the pleasure of your company, Miss——

[*DEBORAH and CAROLINE both step forward.*]

**Caroline** (*gushingly*). Oh, Major, you are too kind.

**Aunt D.** (*aside*). The forward minx, I know he meant me.

**Caroline.** Don't it just make you feel young again, Deacon?

**Deacon.** I can't say as it do, Caroline.

**Caroline.** Don't it make you feel like goin' with the boys, an' fightin' at the mouth of a bayonet?

**Deacon.** No, Caroline, I don't believe in fightin'.

**Uncle J.** What's that, Deacon? Why, when we were boys, you had the reputation of bein' the biggest fighter in all the country round. [*They all laugh.*]

**Caroline.** It's so romantic. I almost wish that I wuz a man. I've been thinkin' of puttin' on men's clothes an' goin' as a little drummer boy.

**Aunt D.** I think your age would prevent you goin' as a boy, Caroline.

**Caroline** (*spitefully*). Oh, you think so, do you?

**Aunt D.** Yes, I think so! [*They go angrily up stage.*]

**Deacon** (*to UNCLE JOHN*). 'Pears ter me as though war had begun in a certain quarter already.

**Uncle J.** That row begun nigh onto forty years ago, Deacon.

**Major** (*coming down, very enthusiastic*). This puts me in mind of 1812. We started away just like this, an' 'Lizabeth said to me—said she——

**Jim.** Select your partners for a reel!

[*Music forte—"Money-Musk."* *They form for the dance.*]

JIM and GRACE lead, MAJOR and CAROLINE, DEACON and DEBORAH, BOB and BESSIE, etc., etc. *Music and dance figures. At the conclusion all stand laughing and talking.*

**Uncle J.** An' now let's go to the house, an' have some of Debby's good cakes and cider.

[**Exeunt all C.,** BOB and BESSIE stand at door, JIM and GRACE down L., GRACE seated.]

\* N. B.—This scene must be well rehearsed, to avoid confusion, and played quickly.

**Bob** (*to BESSIE*). Come on, Bess, ain't we in this ?

**Bess.** Say, Bob, you like me better than Kate Smith, don't you ?

**Bob.** A blamed sight better. Now, come on, or we won't get our share.

**Bess.** I believe you think more of doughnuts than you do of me.

**Bob.** I do when I'm hungry. Come on. [*They exeunt c.*]

**Grace.** How sad it is, Jim, that all this joy of to-day must be followed by the separation to-morrow.

**Jim.** But it must be so, Grace dear. Our country has called for help from her sons, and you would not have me refuse mine ?

**Grace.** No, Jim, it would not be right for you to stay, nor would I have you do so. But it is hard, very hard for me to let you go—now.

**Jim.** And it is hard for me to go, to leave you—my dear little wife.

**Grace.** Don't say that yet, Jim. It will bring bad luck.

**Jim.** No bad luck will ever come to me through you. I have never realized how much I love you until now. But when I come back you will give me the right to call you my wife.

**Grace** (*smiling*). Even that might be bad luck, Jim.

**Jim.** I am willing to risk it. [*Kisses her.*]

**Grace.** Here, Jim. (*She unclasps a chain and locket from her throat.*) Now, don't laugh, dear. Here is a locket ; see it has my portrait and a lock of hair. I will give you this as an amulet to carry you safely through all danger and bring you back to me.

**Jim.** Heaven grant it may. [*He embraces her tenderly.*]

UNCLE JOHN enters c.

**Uncle J.** (*sees them. Aside*). This war will bring suffering to many a heart. May theirs be spared.

**Grace.** Uncle John, are you there ?

**Uncle J.** (*comes down c.*). Yes, Grace.

**Jim.** Father, when I am gone, you will look after Grace.

**Uncle J.** As my own child, Jim.

**Grace.** My father ! [*UNCLE JOHN takes her in his arms.*]

**Uncle J.** They were asking for you at the house. Aunt Debby sent me to find you.

**Jim.** Then come, Grace, or she will be after us herself. You know what Aunt Debby is when she has her mind made up.

**Grace.** Like unto the Medes and the Persians. Come, Jim. [*Exeunt at c., laughing.*]



**Uncle J.** (*looks fondly after them*). How can I let him go? The neighbors have always reproached me for being so wrapped up in Jim. He is so like his mother, so kind and thoughtful. Grace will make him a good wife, and with their children growing up about me, I will live again my own happy childhood. What if he should not come back? Oh, I cannot, will not let him go. (*The people outside sing softly the first verse of "America."* **UNCLE JOHN** *sinks on bench listening. At the conclusion of the song he rises.*) Yes, he shall go, and if his country needs his life, Thy will be done, Thy will be done.

**Enter** **DEACON, TIDD** and **JOHN H., C.**

**Deacon.** John Mathews, I wish you'd tell the people to come here. I want to give 'em this donation and start for home. These goings on are too much fer me. I'm gittin' old.

**Uncle J.** An' so am I, but it jist goes right to my heart to see the young folks enjoy themselves. I'll call 'em, Deacon, an' then I want to hear that speech. Give us a reg'ler old-fashioned Fourth of July one. You used to be a master-hand at oratin' down at the district school, eh, Deacon?

[**Exit** **UNCLE JOHN, C.**

**Deacon** (*to* **JOHN HENRY**, *who has stood up by the door*). John Henry!

**John H.** (*comes down*). Yes, dad.

**Deacon.** I want you to sit down here and mind this box. Don't let it go out of your hands; do you hear?

**John H.** Yes, dad.

**Deacon.** If you do, an' I catch you at it, I'll hide you within an inch of your life.

**John H.** Yes, dad. [**JOHN H.** *takes the box from the DEACON and sits at L.*

**Deacon.** I'd jist like to know why sich sons wuz given to me. John Henry, ye ain't got sense enough to pound sand in a rat hole.

**John H.** No, dad.

**Deacon.** Shut up! Yer brother Bill wuz smart, but just a leetle too smart fer me. He skipped out with three hundred dollars that he stole from that very identical cash box, an' he ain't been heard from since. Don't you ever try on any game like that, John Henry.

**John H.** I won't, dad.

**Deacon.** I know you won't. Bill can stay where he is; it was a good riddance of bad rubbish when he went. I'll prosecute him with the law if he ever dares to set foot here again. I won't try to hide anybody's dishonesty, not even my own family's; so remember that, John Henry.

**John H.** I will, dad.

**Enter JIM at C.**

**Jim.** Deacon !

**Deacon.** Well, James ?

**Jim.** Deacon, as I leave with the regiment to-morrow, I'll give you the keys to the store to-day. You have been very kind to me since I have been in your employ, and I want to thank you.

**Deacon.** I guess, Jim, we've only done our duty for each other, an' I'm sorry to have you go away. I'll take John Henry into the store in your place, an' see ef I can't make a man outen him.

**Jim.** I have the keys at the house, Deacon, and I'll bring them to you. [*Starts C.*]

**Deacon.** No hurry, James. Why don't them people come so that I can make my speech an' go home. I'll go after 'em, and when I go—they'll come. Now, John Henry, you mind what I told you, or you'll get what I promised you.

[*Exit DEACON, C.*]

**Jim.** He has never forgiven Bill, has he ?

**John H.** Nope !

**Jim.** Poor Bill, I wonder where he is now. Who knows, we may meet some day. Perhaps on the field of battle.

[*JIM starts for door ; JOHN H. rises.*]

**John H.** Say, Jim.

**Jim.** Well, John Henry ?

**John H.** They are passin' the apples around down to the house now, an' I ain't gettin' none. Do you s'pose dad 'ud care if I just run down there fer a minute to git my share. I'm awful hungry.

**Jim.** Did he tell you to stay here ?

**John H.** Yes, Jim, to take care of this box. But I won't be gone more'n a minute. You don't know how awful hungry fer apples I am.

**Jim.** Then go along, and I'll stay here until you get back. (*JOHN HENRY runs out C.*) Poor John Henry, I'm afraid he'll find as little pleasure in his life at home as Bill did. I feel that I ought to be doubly kind to him for Bill's sake.

*JOHN HENRY re-enters, his hands full of apples.*

**John H.** I got 'em, an' dad didn't see me. He'll never know I've been away. Won't you have an apple ?

**Jim.** No, thank you. Now don't go away again, John Henry.

**John H.** Nope, I won't. (*Exit JIM at C.*) Jim's a mighty good feller. I wish dad was as good to me. Mebby Bill will come back some day an' take me away. Bill wuz allers mighty good to me too.

BILL enters cautiously at C.

BILL (*looking carefully about*). Is the coast clear I wonder?

JOHN H. (*who is down at L. eating an apple*). I've got to go to the horse trough an' git a drink. (*Starts up and sees BILL*.) Bill! Is it really you?

BILL (*putting his hand over JOHN HENRY'S mouth*). Hush! Is father here?

JOHN H. He's up at the house. Where did you come from, Bill?

BILL. From the West. I just dropped in on my way to New York in my special train.

JOHN H. You don't want to let dad know you are here. He'd have you put in jail.

BILL. Well, I'll take mighty particular good care he don't see me then. Give me one of them apples, I'm hungry.

JOHN H. What have you been a-doin', Bill, since you went away?

BILL. Trampin', here lately, an' I'm out of clothes an' money. Got any money, John Henry?

JOHN H. Nope; dad he don't give me none.

BILL. Well, he never would let me revel in wealth, so I helped myself. (*Sees the box*.) What have you got there?

JOHN H. A box of dad's.

BILL. His old cash box. What's in it?

JOHN H. The money that was donated to the volunteers. He told me to take care of it till he got back; but I sneaked away fer a minute to get them apples.

BILL. You don't know how much is in it, do you?

JOHN H. Nope.

BILL (*aside*). It wouldn't take me long to find out. I've opened it before. (*Aloud*.) I wish you'd try to get some more apples for me, I haven't had a square meal for a week. I'll keep the box till you get back—unless I see some one comin'.

JOHN H. I hadn't ought to go. But I'll get 'em for you, Bill.

[Exit JOHN H., C.]

BILL. I wonder if it was luck or the devil that sent me here to-day. I was about to slink through the town without being seen, but the remembrance of my friendship with Jim brought me here. I wouldn't care to have him see me though. (*Takes up the box*.) The regiment funds in the old cash box. I wonder why dad keeps on using this; any one can open it with a knife blade. Suppose I opened it and took the money. Dad can afford to pay it back again. No one would ever suspect me. It's the kind of a lock that makes burglary a temptation. I'll just have a look at what's inside. (*He opens the box*.) Somebody is coming! (*Listens*.) No, a false alarm. (*Takes packet*

*of bills from the envelope.)* Just look at the greenbacks ! It is a sight for sore eyes. *(Puts the money into his pocket.)* Dad, this will about square you and me ; but you will be rather surprised when you find that you have paid your debts. *(Takes a newspaper from his pocket, and places it in the envelope which contains the money.)* The old man will think this is about the costliest piece of news he ever paid for. *(He puts the envelope in the box and relocks it.)* Quite a good day's work. I'll have a square meal to-night anyway.

**Enter JOHN H. hurriedly at C.**

**John H.** Bill, dad's comin' !

**Bill.** Did he see you ?

**John H.** No ! I dodged under the currant bushes and crawled here.

**Bill.** He must never know that I have been here. Promise me that you won't tell. Swear it ! If you ever tell, I'll kill you !

**John H.** I won't tell, Bill ! I swear I won't !

**Bill.** Then good-bye, John Henry !

**John H.** Good-bye, Bill ! **(Exit BILL C.)** There he goes crawlin' through the bushes toward the woods.. Gracious, if dad ever finds I've left the barn he'll skin me alive.

*[He sits on the bench at L. holding the box.]*

**Enter the DEACON and JIM, C.**

**Jim.** Here are the keys of the store, Deacon. You will find them all here. *[Hands keys.]*

**Deacon.** Thank you, James. Now for my speech, as at last they're comin'. *(Takes the box from JOHN H.)* A body would think they didn't want the money. It's all in here. Five hundred dollars. A pretty nice sum, eh, Jim ? *(Opens the box, takes out the envelope, finds the paper.)* What is this ! Where is the money ? It is gone ! gone !

**Jim.** Gone !

**Deacon.** Gone ! I've been robbed ! Do you hear ? Robbed ! John Henry, did you let go of this box ? Were you out of the barn ? Answer me ! Can't you speak ?

**Jim.** Tell him the truth, John Henry !

**Deacon.** I know the money was in the box when I gave it to him. Why don't you answer me ?

**Jim.** Tell him, John.

**John H.** I wuz away fer a minute, dad ; don't beat me. I only went to get something to eat. I was so hungry——

**Deacon.** You idiot ! Was anybody in the barn when you went away ?

**John H.** No one but Jim !

**Deacon.** Jim ?

**John H.** You watched it while I was away, didn't you, Jim?

**Jim.** Yes, I was here!

**Deacon** (*to JOHN HENRY*). How long were you away?

**John H.** Only for a minute, dad.

**Deacon.** Long enough for the money to go, too.

**Jim.** What do you mean?

**Deacon.** That after all your pretensions to honesty, you are no better than my son Bill!

**Jim.** You do not think that I—no—no!

**Deacon.** John Henry, go outside until I call you. (*Exit JOHN H., C.*) James Mathews, I'll speak plain, I believe you stole that money.

**Jim.** I—stole—the money?

**Deacon.** You had the key to that box. You were here alone long enough to open it. I don't like to think it of you, Jim, but I can't do anything else—now.

**Jim.** You do not believe I am a thief? You cannot believe it of me; I swear to you that I am innocent!

**Deacon.** Now look here, Jim. Give the money back and I'll say no more about it.

**Jim.** Deacon, I swear to you—

**Enter BESSIE at C.**

**Bess.** Here we come, Deacon, to listen to the speech.

**Deacon.** Give it to me, Jim, or I'll accuse you before them all.

**Jim.** You have no right—I am innocent!

**Deacon.** Well, the money is gone, and some one has got to suffer for it.

**Enter, C., GRACE, UNCLE JOHN, AUNT D., CAROLINE, MAJOR, BOB and the others.** MAJOR *places the bench C. for the DEACON.*

**Grace.** Come, Deacon, now for your eloquence. [*Stands R.*

**Major.** As old Col. Taylor said, just as we started in to the battle of Monterey—says he—

**Caroline.** I am just filled to the brim with patriotism—hooray!

**Bob.** It looks to me now more like a hard cider jag.

[*AUNT D. cuffs him; he retires.*

**Aunt D.** Do be quiet, Caroline, and let people talk who have something to say.

**Grace.** Come, Deacon!

**Bob.** Blaze away!

**Jim.** Deacon, I beg of you to spare me. I swear that I am innocent. Think of my father.

**Uncle J.** What is the matter, Jim, you are as pale as a ghost?

[*Comes to C.*

**Deacon.** Matter enough. The money—  
**Jim** (*grasps his arm*). Stop! Give me until to-morrow.  
 For my father's sake—for her sake. [*Points to GRACE.*]

**Deacon.** I have decided to pay the regiment money to Captain Smith to-morrow. There will be no speech to-day.

**Caroline.** Oh, Deacon!

[*Goes up stage.*  
*Follows him up.*]

**Uncle J.** Such a disappointment.

**Jim.** Thank God, they will not know.

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

**Scene.**—*A kitchen interior. Doors R. and L. 2 E. Window in flat R. C., with curtain. Door in flat L. C. Fireplace R. 1 E. Cupboard at back between door and window. Table at L. Kitchen chairs, etc., with big arm-chair before fireplace.*

**BESSIE and BOB discovered.** BESSIE is churning C. BOB sits on table watching her.

**Bess.** And don't they ever churn in the city, Bob?

**Bob.** Naw! You can't make butter out of chalk and water.

**Bess.** But where do they get their butter?

**Bob.** Don't have none!

**Bess.** Then what do they eat on their bread?

**Bob.** Butterine.

**Bess.** Well, it strikes me they don't have anything that's real in the city.

**Bob.** Well, you kin bet your life they do!

**Bess.** What?

**Bob.** Why, real fun.

**Bess.** We have that in the country.

**Bob.** I hain't seen none of it.

**Bess.** Oh, Bob, since you've been here, I think you've had a real good time.

**Bob.** Yes, I appear to enjoy myself; but things ain't what they used to be.

**Bess.** Everybody is talkin' of nothin' but war and fightin' just now; but you wait until winter comes an' then I'll show you what fun we have.

**Bob** (*gloomily*). What can you do to excite yourself in a place like this?

**Bess.** We have singin' schools, an' spellin' schools, an' sleigh-rides, an' donation parties or the preacher's folks. I guess people in the city don't have no more fun than that.

**Bob.** Hully Gee! We have de Variety. I wouldn't give an evenin' at de Variety fer a whole week of donation parties.

**Bess.** What's a Variety, Bob?

**Bob.** What's a Variety? It's a place where yer preachers an' deacons go to enjoy themselves when dey goes to de city an' wants to see de tiger.

**Bess.** Oh, Bob! Deacons never go to the circus.

**Bob.** Well, maybe not. But they goes out sometimes to see the elephant.

**Bess** (*stops churning*). It's your turn to churn now.

**Bob.** Not much. You've only done a hundred and fifty dashes, and my turn don't come till a hundred an' fifty-five!

[*Bess takes up the dasher and counts aloud from fifty-one to fifty-five. Bob jumps down from the table, whistles a dance tune and does a few steps.*]

**Bess.** Come on, it's your turn now.

**Bob.** Well, I suppose I must. (*Churns violently.*) S'pose my old friends "Irish Mike" or "Ash-barrel Jimmy" should see me now. They would never believe that their old pard could descend to such menial female labor. (*He stops.*) Say, Bessie!

**Bess** (*who has taken his place on table*). Yep!

**Bob.** I'll give you my piece of pie at dinner if you'll rest me.

**Bess.** Nope! I ain't a-goin' to.

**Bob.** I'll let you read that story of "Red-handed Bill" that Aunt Debby licked me for havin'.

**Bess.** You might as well go on, Bob, I won't rest you.

**Bob.** I'll—— Say, Bess, would you like to see a variety?

**Bess.** Yep.

**Bob.** If you'll rest me another hundred and fifty, I'll show you how they does.

**Bess** (*jumps down from table*). Bob Mathews, I believe you are lazy.

**Bob.** No, Bess, I am not lazy; but I don't like to work. (*She takes the dasher and begins to churn.*) Now, Bess, you must suppose that I am a bloomin' young woman with curly yellow hair, a white skirt that comes to here and stands out like that!

[*He imitates the dress of a ballet dancer.*]

**Bess.** Oh, Bob Mathews.

[*Turns away.*]

**Bob.** An' pink tights.

**Bess.** What's tights, Bob?

**Bob.** Long pink stockings that look like—— Well, just like they didn't have any stockings on.

**Bess.** Why, Bob!

**Bob.** They come running on just like this, (*imitates*) an' then begin to dance.

**Bess.** A dance! Bob, I won't look. I'm a Baptist, an' I won't go against my morals. (*BOB continues to dance. BESS turns to watch him. She forgets to churn, and when he stops she applauds.*) Oh, Bob, teach me that, an' I'll do it at our next Sunday school entertainment. Wouldn't it just surprise Aunt Debby and the preacher's folks?

**Bob.** Well, I rather think it would. Come on, then. (*She takes his hand.*) You stand like this, put your foot like this, you turn like this, an' kick like that!

[*She imitates his movement, and as they make the last kick, UNCLE JOHN enters at L.*]

**Uncle J.** (*starting back in surprise.*) What is all this?

**Bob.** Holy smoke, it's grandad!

[*He walks up to the window whistling. BESSIE takes the dasher and churns vigorously.*]

**Uncle J.** Can't you children keep your feet on the floor where they belong? What were you trying to do?

**Bob.** That is a new exercise they are trying to introduce into the public schools. It is very fashionable in perlite society just now.

**Uncle J.** Well, I guess you two had better leave it to perlite society then. [*Crosses and sits in chair by fireplace.*]

**Bess** (*very demurely*). Bob, I guess the butter's come.

[*BOB crosses C. to BESS.*]

**Uncle J.** Then take it out to your Aunt Debby.

[*BOB and BESSIE take hold of the churn.*]

**Bob.** Let go, Bess, I can carry it by myself.

[*He puts his arms about the churn and starts to L.*]

**Bess.** You had better let me help you, Bob.

**Bob.** Go away, Bess. I've got a muscle like a slugger.

[*BESS opens the door L. for him; he staggers out; there is a crash and a yell.*]

**Bess** (*stands in the doorway horror-stricken*). Oh, Bob, what have you done?

**Bob** (*outside*). I've let it drop. Give my regards to Aunt Debby. I've started for Canada! [*Exit BESS at L.*]

**Uncle J.** If I hadn't raised two boys, I would think that there was no hope for Bob; but I wouldn't change him for all his wild ways. If children only knew what anxious days and nights were passed for them by their parents, I think they would be more careful of what they do.

**Enter GRACE at L.**

**Grace.** Good morning, Uncle John.

**Uncle J.** Good morning, Grace. How are you to-day?



**Grace.** Pretty well, thank you. And how do you find yourself?

**Uncle J.** Fair to middlin'. Debby, she feels a little out-o'-sorts about somethin' Caroline Antwerp said yesterday about her pie-crusts; but I guess she'll get over it.

**Grace.** I think she will, Uncle John.

**Uncle J.** You know how it is in a community with two unmarried women of the age of Caroline and Debby. They are more jealous of each other than two old hens.

[*Both laugh heartily.*]

**Grace.** Major Mudge drove past the school-house and told me that he was coming here; so I gave the children a half holiday and came with him. I couldn't stay away as Jimmy is to leave us to-day.

**Uncle J.** You have always been welcome, Grace, and now we feel as though this was your place by right. It seems real comfortable to have you around.

**Grace.** Uncle John, what if Jim should not come back!

**Uncle J.** We would try and comfort ourselves with the thought that he had died like an honest man and a patriot.

**Grace.** I feel as though I could not let him go. He is to be my husband.

**Uncle J.** He is my only son. We must not be selfish, even in our love, when our country is at stake.

**Enter MAJOR MUDGE, L.**

**Major.** That is right, Uncle John, cheer her up. As I said to my first wife, 'Elizabeth, when I started away to fight the Mexicans, sez I—(*GRACE laughs.*) There, now, you are lookin' right peart an' chipper like.

**Grace.** And I feel better, Major. Uncle John and yourself have cheered me greatly.

**Major.** Just as I said to Elizabeth, said I—

**Uncle J.** I console myself with this, even though I know my boy is going into danger; he goes away with a clean name, not with a cloud of disgrace over him.

**Major.** Like Deacon Tidd's son Bill. The Deacon has been gettin' harder an' harder since Bill run away last spring.

**Uncle J.** It's too bad. Bill wuz allers a good-hearted boy—a little wild inclined maybe—but the Deacon was allers powerful hard with him. He could never remember that boys must be boys.

**Major.** How did Jim an' the Deacon get along together in the store?

**Uncle J.** Pretty fair. Of late Jim has been dissatisfied like; all nervous an' worked up about the war an' such trouble.

**Grace.** Why will brothers quarrel and bring so much misery to each other?

**Major.** It occurs in the best of families.

**Uncle J.** There is never any trouble so bad but what it might be worse. I allers think when people are groanin' over hard times an' bad luck an' poor crops, that they ought to be thankful they still have their health and homes.

**Major.** Yes, they should.

**Uncle J.** An' when they are moanin' over the loss of a friend, or the death of one they love, they'd better far be glad the loved ones are not suffering from some shame or disgrace even worse than death.

*JIM enters at L., and stands at the door listening.  
The others do not observe him.*

**Major.** That is a Gospel fact.

**Uncle J.** For my part, I'd rather my boy was dead, and know that he had died bravely and honorably, than to find out that he had become a liar or a thief. *[JIM comes forward.]*

**Jim.** Father, suppose some one had accused me of what you said just now, and proofs of guilt were strong against me, but I would tell you that I was innocent. What would you do?

**Grace.** What do you mean, Jim? *[She comes to him.]*

**Jim.** What would you do, father?

**Uncle J. (rises).** Well, Jimmy, if you told me you were innocent, I'd stick by you till the last trump.

**Jim (taking UNCLE JOHN'S hand gratefully).** Thank you, father. Grace, may I speak with you a moment?

*[They go up stage.]*

**Uncle J. (aside to MAJOR).** Look at them, Major, are they not a couple to be proud of?

**Major.** Yes, as Bob says, "They are a pair to draw to." *(Both laugh.)* Bless my soul, John! I've clean forgot what I stopped for. As I was passin' Deacon Tidd's store he gave me this letter to give to you, an' I wuz as near to forgettin' it as two peas. *[Takes the letter from the lining of his hat.]*

**Uncle J.** It strikes me, Major, that you'd forget your head some day ef it wasn't fastened tight to your shoulders.

**Major.** That is just what 'Lizabeth allers said to me—says she—

**Uncle J.** Come, Major, we'll go into the sittin'-room, an' I'll get my spectacles an' read the Deacon's letter. Debby will draw you a glass of cider. Come on, an' let the young folks do a little talkin'. *[They laugh and dig each other in the ribs.]*

**Major.** I declare, John, ef it hadn't been for you, like as not I'd a stayed here and spoiled the whole thing, ez 'Lizabeth said to me. *(They start off R. arm in arm.)* Jist afore I started away to fight the Mexicans—

*[They go out R. JIM and GRACE come down.]*

**Jim.** Grace, I want your comfort and advice.

**Grace.** I'm afraid I need too much comfort myself to spare any ; but I'll do my best, and we will share alike.

**Jim.** Grace dear, I am in great trouble.

**Grace.** In trouble, Jim ?

**Jim.** If I could only be certain that you would not doubt me.

**Grace.** Doubt you !

**Jim.** Yesterday the regiment funds were stolen from Deacon Tidd's cash-box, and—I can't tell you ! Don't you see what I mean ?

**Grace.** And Deacon Tidd says that you—that *you* took the money ! He dares say that ?

**Jim.** Yes, Grace.

**Grace.** He says what is not true !

**Jim** (*taking her in his arms*). I knew that you would believe in me.

**Grace.** How could I doubt you. Jim, does your father know of this ?

**Jim.** No, Grace. The money was taken from the cash-box yesterday. Because I was the only one besides himself who had a key to the box, the Deacon accused me and threatened to expose me before my father's guests. I implored him to give me until to-day, thinking perhaps I might find some clue.

**Grace.** And to-day ?

**Jim.** I am as much in the dark as yesterday, and I must tell my father that I—am accused of being a thief. He said a little while ago that he would rather see me dead. Will he believe in me ?

**Grace.** He must ! But, Jim, your regiment is ordered to the front to-day.

**Jim.** And I cannot go. The Deacon swore that unless I restored the money, he would have me placed under arrest. Think of my father's shame. He has always been so proud of me, and see what I have brought upon him.

**Grace.** But you are innocent !

**Jim.** No man is believed innocent until he has proved himself so. If I can only do that before the regiment starts away.

[UNCLE JOHN *calls outside*.

**Uncle J.** Major !

**Jim.** Here comes father now.

UNCLE JOHN *enters at R., laughing. He has the letter in his hands still unopened.*

**Uncle J.** I declare, the Major is the funniest man I ever saw. He has just gone and forgotten his wagon whip. If he don't lose himself some day it will be on account of—(*observes Jim*

and GRACE). Well, what is the matter with you two? Why, Gracie, child, you are crying, and there are tears in Jim's eyes. You haven't been quarrelling, have you?

Jim. No, father!

Uncle J. What is the matter then?

Jim. Father I—I—no, I cannot tell him.

Uncle J. Well, you two do behave mighty sin'gler. If you are feelin' bad on account of your separation don't be ashamed of it. Here, Jim, I can't find my spectacles. I want you to read this letter for me. [*He hands JIM the letter, and sits before the fireplace.*]

Jim (*aside to GRACE*). It is from the Deacon. (*He opens letter and reads.*) "I am coming this morning to see you on particular business. Your son, James,"—I cannot read it—I cannot! (*He hands the letter to GRACE.*) Go on, you read it to him. [*GRACE takes the letter and kneels by UNCLE JOHN.*]

Grace (*reading*). "Your son James who I thought was an honest man——"

Uncle J. What is that!

Grace. "Has turned out to be——" [*Hesitates.*]

Jim. Go on!

Grace. "A thief!"

Uncle J. A thief! My Jim! [*Rises.*]

Jim. Let him hear it all!

Grace. "And yesterday, robbed my cash-box of the regiment money—five hundred dollars!"

Uncle J. My God! [*Falls back into the chair.*]

Jim. Father! [*Starts toward him.*]

Uncle J. (*motions him back*). Wait! Let me hear it all!

Grace. "If you can make him return the money, or will repay it yourself, I will promise to say nothing about the matter; but if you don't, I will see what the law can do!"

Uncle J. Is that all?

Grace. All! [*She rises.*]

Uncle J. (*rises and crosses to JIM and looks into his face*). Is this true, Jim?

Jim. Not one word! Father, you do not doubt me?

Uncle J. No! Jim, no! [*Offers his hand.*]

Jim. Thank you, father. [*Grasps his hand.*]

Enter BOB, L.

Bob. Hello, Grace! Hello, Jim! Say, grandpa, Ole Screw-eye Tidd an' John Henry ditto are drivin' up the lane. Shall I tell 'em to come in here?

Uncle J. Yes, tell them to come in here!

Bob. All right. Say, Jim, I'm goin' to lick John Henry; he gave Bess a candy-heart yesterday, with "I love you" printed

on it, an' I don't like to have none of our family mix up with them Tiddses.

**Jim.** Go, Bob, do as father said. (**Exit BOB, L.**) Father you won't let anything the Deacon says change your mind, will you?

**Uncle J.** Jim, I told you awhile ago if you got into trouble, an' I thought you were innocent, I'd stand by you until doomsday, an, I'll do it—or break my neck.

**Enter L., DEACON TIDD, followed by BOB, and JOHN HENRY.**

**Uncle J.** Good-mornin', Deacon.

**Deacon.** Good-mornin'! Good-mornin', Miss.

**Uncle J.** Sit down, Deacon. 'Sit down, John Henry. Bob, you go an' tend to the Deacon's horses.

**Bob** (*aside to JOHN H. as he goes out*). I'm a-goin to thrash you the first time I get a chance. [**Exit BOB at L.**]

**Uncle J.** Jim, you an' Grace sit here. Deacon, lets settle this in as few words as possible. Will you tell me just what you want?

**Deacon.** That is what I am here for.

**John H.** Yes, Uncle John, that is what he is here for.

**Deacon.** Yesterday I left John Henry in the barn to watch my cash-box containing this money. Jim come in while John was alone, and knowin' what was in the box, he let John Henry go away on an errand, and while he was gone—(*turns and looks at JIM*) *somebody* unlocked the box and stole the money.

**John H.** Jim, I don't want you to think—.

**Deacon.** You shut up! Now there was only two persons had keys to that box—one was me, the other was Jim.

**John H.** Now, Jim, I didn't say—

**Deacon.** You be quiet er I'll hide ye. Now go out doors till I've done talkin'.

**John H.** Yes, dad. But, Jim, I ain't said one word that—

**Deacon.** Go on out!

**John H.** Yes, dad.

[**Exit JOHN H., L.**]

**Deacon.** Now, John Mathews, if you kin get Jim to give this money back, or pay it back yourself, I will let matters drop just where they be.

**Jim.** I did not take the money, and I will not consent to father paying you any amount.

**Uncle J.** Be quiet, Jim. (*To DEACON.*) The amount, you say, is five hundred dollars?

**Deacon.** That is what I said.

**Jim.** Father, I—

**Uncle J.** Be quiet, Jim. An' if I pay you that sum, you will acquit my boy of everything?

**Deacon.** Yes. If you don't, I'll have him jailed.

**Jim.** I dare you to do your worst. I am not guilty.

**Deacon.** Well, I can come 'mighty near to provin' you so, anyhow.

**Uncle J.** He is right. Deacon, I will pay you this money.

**Jim.** Father, I will not allow it.

**Uncle J.** Jim, my boy, I'm doin' what I think is for the best.

**Deacon** (*impatently*). Come, decide! I can't dilly-dally here much longer. Are you going to pay me or not? What do you say?

**Uncle J.** I will pay the money. (*JIM makes a gesture of entreaty.*) Jim, I am doin' my duty. Go, now, an' let the Deacon an' me settle this.

**Grace.** Come, Jim. [*She leads him off at R.*]

**Deacon.** Come, I am in a hurry.

**Uncle J.** Deacon, I haven't five hundred dollars in ready money, but I will give you my note.

**Deacon.** I don't trust to notes. If you will give me a mortgage on your farm fer a year's time—I don't want to be hard—why, all right. You needn't say anything about it to Jim, fer he'd never give in.

**Uncle J.** I consent.

**Deacon.** I brung the mortgage papers with me, in case we would need them. (*Takes papers from his pocket.*) You can sign 'em now an' we can swear to 'em this afternoon. An' here's the statement I'll give you for it.

[*UNCLE JOHN signs the mortgage papers and DEACON the statement.*]

**Deacon.** There, now, is yer son's liberty.

[*Gives UNCLE J. the statement and pockets the papers.*]

**Uncle J.** (*goes to door R. and calls*). Jim!

**Enter JIM.**

**Jim.** Yes, father!

**Uncle J.** (*Hands JIM the statement*). There, my boy, you are free.

**Jim** (*to DEACON*). You shall suffer for this some day. I shall find out the truth and it may strike nearer to home than you dream.

**Deacon.** What do you mean?

**Uncle J.** Stop, Deacon! Stop, Jim! Deacon, you have now what you wished. I have given you five hundred dollars to stop the scandalous tongues of this community who would be glad through envy to believe wrong of my boy. You have always pretended to be my friend, but you have tried to ruin Jim and through him me. I know you now as you are. Go!

**Deacon.** You'd better not say too much, John Mathews. You

may want my help some day. You've always held your head above me, yet, in spite of this trouble, I'd a still been friends with you. Now we are enemies, and I'll do you all the harm I can !

**Jim.** Oh, you cur !

**Uncle J.** Stop, Jim, his gray hairs protect him. Go !

[**Exit** DEACON, L.]

**Jim.** Father, do you think you have done what is best ?

**Uncle J.** My boy, I know how glad folks are if they can drag a man down. Even if you were brought to trial and cleared, part of the shame would always cling to you. When your dear mother lay dyin', she put you in my arms an' said, "John, I give him to you, promise me that you will never let any trouble come to him that you can help." She gave you to me innocent, and I will try and keep you so in the eyes of men ; you must answer for yourself to Heaven.

**Jim.** Yes, father.

**Uncle J.** You have heard me speak of your Uncle James, my only brother. When he was about your age, he was accused as you are now ; but he was tried and sent to the prison. He served his sentence and when he was again free the guilty one was found. But it was too late then ; Jim's best chance in life was gone, an' he died a broken-hearted man. I thought of him to-day, and felt there was no sacrifice I could make which would be too great to save you from his fate.

**Jim.** God bless you, father. I can pay the money ten times over ; but I can never repay your love and kindness.

**Uncle J.** Don't let's say any more about it, Jim. Now go to Grace and dry her tears.

**Enter from R.** AUNT DEBBY, *her dress covered with flour, the rolling-pin in her hand.* BESSIE *follows her, crying.*

**Aunt D.** Jim, Bessie says the regiment is comin' down the street, and that you must join 'em as they go by here. Is that true ?

**Jim.** Yes, Aunt Debby.

**Aunt D.** And I haven't got half your things ready. John, don't you let them carry him off in this way. Jim, don't you go. I'll hide you till they are gone.

**Uncle J.** Debby, I am ashamed of you. Jim is not the kind of stuff that cowards are made of.

**Aunt D.** Then I'll go and get the things ready. Come on, Bess. There's the cookies and sassafras to put in his grip-sack, and—oh, Jim, if you go and get shot, an' run around in damp weather and get your feet wet, an' catch cold an' die. I'll put catnip in your carpet-bag an' make a mustard plaster fer your back.

[AUNT D. **exits** R. MAJOR *comes in and salutes her as she passes him.*

BOB **enters** L. *with a drum and a flag.*

**Major.** Hooray! This brings me back to the old times of the Mexican War. When I started off to fight, 'Lizabeth said to me—

**Bob.** Shoulder arms—'bout face! Salutè! Say, Jim, can't I go too? Young America's ragin' in me so big that I expect to explode! Hooray!

**Major.** Hooray! [*Music, piano. "The Girl I Left Behind Me."*]

GRACE **enters** at R.

**Grace.** Jim, the boys are coming this way and you must go.

**Jim.** I must, Grace dear.

**Grace.** Then go, Jim, and do the best you can.

[*He changes his coat to the uniform.*]

BESSIE **enters** R. *with his coat and cap. Music forte.*

AUNT D. **enters** at R.

**Aunt D.** Oh my, Jim, they are here! (*She drops the grip-sack she carries on MAJOR'S feet and throws her arms about his neck.*) Write often, Jim, and don't forget the mustard plasters.

**Major.** Good-bye, Jim,—as I says to 'Lizabeth.

**Uncle J.** The boys are at the door. God bless you, Jim, and take care of you.

**Grace.** And bring you back to us when your duty is done!

[JIM *stands* C. *with his arm about GRACE, and holding* UNCLE JOHN'S *hand.* AUNT D. *sobbing in the MAJOR'S arms.* BOB *and BESSIE marching to music, at L.*

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

**Scene.**—*Same as that of Act II.*

AUNT DEBBY *discovered at table, peeling potatoes.*

**Aunt D.** (*sings*).

"Oh, Beulah land, sweet Beulah land,  
As on thy highest mount I stand."

(*Sighs.*) I declare to goodness ef it don't seem as though



everything went wrong to once. Even potatoes are little this year. I suppose it's because the whole universe is concentratin' its attention to this struggle between brothers, an' has no time to think of such things as taters' an' crops. To-day is Jimmy's birthday. Poor boy! I wonder if he is enjoyin' it, an' what he's doin'. John keeps worryin' about him all the time, but he won't say nothin'. An' what with hard times an' poor crops—well, I think we will do mighty well to pull through the winter. (*Sound of sleigh-bells heard. She goes up to window.*) Laws-a-mercy! Here comes Major Mudge down the road; 'pears to me that he gits more military-lookin' ever day. (*Sound of bells, nearer.*) AUNT DEBBY rolls down her sleeves and adjusts her cap and apron.) I declare, I do look a sight. (*Bells cease, knock at door in flat.*) I do feel that flustered! (*She goes to door and opens it.*) Well, Major, is it really you? Come right in.

*The MAJOR enters. He is well wrapped up, and has a tippet tied over his military cap. He stamps his feet and slaps his hands to warm them.*

**Major.** Howdy do, Debby!

**Aunt D.** Howdy do, Major. How are you?

**Major** (*taking off his wraps*). Just pretty tol'able, thank ye. How are all of your folks? [*Sits before fire.*]

**Aunt D.** Fair to middlin'. Any news from the village, Major?

**Major.** Andy Smith has got the flamatory rheumatism.

**Aunt D.** You don't say!

**Major.** An' Mehitable Jenkins has run away with a Cincinnati drummer.

**Aunt D.** You don't mean it? Mehitable Jenkins. Well, of all things! What do her folks say?

**Major.** Well, you know, Mehitable was not young, an' her pa said it was a good thing she went; but Mrs. Jenkins took it tol'able hard. You know Mehitable was a pow'ful good hand to help her with the housework.

**Aunt D.** She *will* be missed. I wonder if she will be churched?

**Major.** Like as not. That is the first thing people 'round here generally think about. If one of the lambs gits out of the fold, they generally try to keep 'em out altogether instead of tryin' to coax 'em back.

**Aunt D.** I allus thought Mehitable wuz gettin' lively ever since I saw her at meetin' with that store cloak on; the one with the bead fringe. You can't fool me. Was the man a good-lookin' feller?

**Major.** Fair to middlin'.

**Aunt D.** Poor Mehitable ! At her age too ! Well, there's no tellin' what might happen to any of us.

**Major.** Mary Ann Smith just got a telegram from the hospital at Cairo, that her son Jake has been wounded, an' fer her to come to him at once.

**Aunt D.** Now, that's just too bad. Jake was everything to her. Oh, Major, what would become of John if he would get word that somethin' awful had happened to Jim.

**Major.** Jim is all right. A person hadn't ought to worry these days, for if they begin they'll just be on pins and needles all the time. As I says to 'Lizabeth in 1845—sez I——

**Enter BOB at R.**

**Bob.** Hello, Major, how's yer wooden leg this morning ?

**Aunt D.** Why, Bob Mathews, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

**Bob.** What for, because I told the truth ? It is a wooden leg, ain't it, Major ?

**Major.** Yes, sir, an' I'm not ashamed of it. I won it while I wuz fightin' for your country. I got it in the Mexican War.

**Bob.** I wonder if that is where Aunt Debby got her wooden head !

**Major** (*laughing*). That's one on you, Debby !

**Aunt D.** (*indignantly*). Bob Mathews, you impudent boy. I'll tell your grandpa on you.

**Major.** Boys will be boys, Debby. Don't take what Bob said so much to heart. You can't help your head, you know.

**Bob.** No, for she was born so. [*Both laugh.*]

**Aunt D.** Major Mudge, you are an old fool, and I'm ashamed to think that a man of your age would consort with a boy in makin' fun of me. But I'd like to know what more I could expect from a broken-down, wooden-legged old man like you. As for you, Bob Mathews, I'll tell your grandpa on you as sure as I'm a living woman. Oh, Major Mudge, you mean, mean thing ! [*She exits angrily at R.*]

**Major** (*staring after her*). Whew !

**Bob.** Well, I'll be jiggered !

**Major.** Who would a' thought it ?

**Bob.** Oh, she's a bird !

**Major.** A reg'lar hummer ! Is she often took that way ?

**Bob.** Reg'lar as the day comes.

**Major.** Well, I'll be dashed. I hadn't ought to have laughed, Bob. It was a mighty measly joke anyway.

**Bob.** Oh, I wouldn't worry about it if I were you. She likes you and it will be all right. Come on, lets see if we can't square ourselves before she tells grandad.

[**Exeunt MAJOR and BOB at R.**]

**Enter** **UNCLE JOHN** *at L., he walks to the window and looks out.*

**Uncle J.** It must be pretty cold out to-day. I hope Bob has all the critters warm and comfortable; I wouldn't like to think that I was in here by a warm fire and that some one else was sufferin' outside. (*He sits in front of the fire. Music, piano. "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground."*) I wonder if Jim is safe and warm to-night, or if he is trampin' through the cold and snow while I am sittin' here by the fire. I'll try not to worry, for I gave him into your hands, Father of us all, and Thy will be done. This is Jim's birthday. Just twenty-five years ago, his mother laid him in my arms. "We will call him James, for your brother," she said. "You must do your best for him and keep him safe from harm." Then she died, and he wuz all that wuz left to me. I have watched him, and cared for him, and every year I have loved him more and more. How well I remember when he put on his first trousers and boots. He wuz mighty proud of them little red-topped boots. Then afore I knew it, he wuz a man grown, but he has always been to me the same little Jim. This is the first birthday that he has ever spent away from home, an' we shall have things just the same as if he was here. Maybe he will know then that we are thinking of him. (**GRACE enters softly at L.**) I wish I could hear from him to-day. He surely won't forget to write on his birthday. [**GRACE comes down to him.**]

**Grace.** He has not forgotten us. See, a letter for you and one for me.

**Uncle J.** Is he well, Grace? Is he safe and well? Read me his letter.

**Grace** (*reading*). "Father, I have received a birthday gift. I have been appointed Captain of the Fourteenth Ohio Volunteers." A Captain, father! Isn't that glorious! Captain James Mathews! [*She kisses the letter.*]

**Uncle J.** Our Jim!

**Grace.** And see, he encloses a letter from his Colonel. (*Reads.*) "Private James Mathews, appointed to the rank of Captain for bravery in the field of action." Father, why don't you speak, are you not glad?

**Uncle J.** It took away my breath so fer a minute that I can hardly speak yet. Our Jim a captain!

**Grace.** Isn't it glorious that we got the news on his birthday. Oh, if he were only here!

**Uncle J.** He shall have a birthday party anyhow, an' when we set down to the table, we will put a chair for Jim. Tell Aunt Debby to invite every one—let them all know of Jim's bravery. [**GRACE kisses him and runs out at R.**]

**Uncle J.** (*rises*). I thank Thee, Father, I thank Thee. I gave his life into your charge ; guide and protect him.

**Enter** MAJOR and BOB at R.

**Major.** John, I congratulate you. Give me your hand. Our Jim a captain, and for bravery. Oh, I knew all along that he'd do. He ain't had me as a military model all these years for nothin'.

**Bob.** That's right, Major, you have certainly said enough about your fightin' in Mexico.

**Major.** How do you feel about it, John ?

**Uncle J.** Major, I do believe that I'm near pleased to death. Hitch up the horses, Bob, an' drive over in the big sled for Caroline Antwerp, and the rest of the neighbors. You go too, Major, and ask whoever you meet to come here to a feast in honor of Captain James Mathews. Bob, you go call Aunt Debby and then help the Major.

**Bob.** There won't any grass grow under my feet this day.

[BOB **exit** at R.]

**Major.** Nor mine, you can bet your last dollar on that. (*At door, L.*) Captain James Mathews ! Hooray !

[MAJOR **exit** at L. BESSIE *comes in* at R.]

**Bess.** Say, Uncle John, is it true ?

**Uncle J.** It is all true, every word of it. Hurry around, Bess, an' pop some corn. Jim's goin' to have such a birthday as he never had before.

**Bess.** Isn't it just lovely !

[*She takes some popcorn from a string that hangs by the fireplace and shells it in a bowl which she takes from the cupboard. Sound of sleighbells outside. They gradually die away.*]

**Uncle J.** (*goes to window*). There goes the Major. I declare if he hasn't forgotten his tippet. I hope he won't get his ears froze.

**Enter** AUNT D. at R.

**Aunt D.** I knew it ! I told you so ! I knew it all the time. I declare, John, I feel so flustered, I don't know what to do.

**Uncle J.** Then fly around and set out such a feast of your good things as you never set out before. I've sent out the Major to invite the neighbors in, and we must have a supper as will do Captain James Mathews an honor.

**Aunt D.** Well, you just leave that to me. Now sit down, you look nigh excited to death.

**Uncle J.** Well, maybe I do. It ain't every day that a father gets word his son has been made a captain fer bravery on the field of action.

[BOB and GRACE enter at R. GRACE helps UNCLE JOHN to chair before fireplace. BOB and BESSIE kneel before the fire and pop corn. GRACE and AUNT DEBBY set the table. The stage grows dark. GRACE sings "Home, Sweet Home" as she works. AUNT D. lights a candle and sets it before the window. UNCLE JOHN rises and takes a box from the cupboard and brings it over by the fire. He opens it and takes out a baby shoe, a lock of gray hair, and a child's curl.

**Uncle J.** Grace! (She comes over and kneels beside his chair. Red glow on at fireplace.) Grace, here is Jim's little baby shoe. He dropped the other one in the well down by the barn. And this is one of his baby curls. I mind how bad it made me feel when Debby cut them off. This is a lock of his mother's hair. Oh, if she were only alive to see this day. Maybe she can see us Grace, and is as happy as ourselves. Set this little shoe at Jim's place at the table. The place of my son, Captain James Mathews.

[She kisses the shoe and sets it in a chair at the head of the table. Sound of sleighbells heard. BOB and BESSIE run to the window.

**Bob.** Here comes the Major with the sled chuck full of people.

**Bess.** There is Caroline Antwerp, and Uncle Bill Gilpert—

**Bob.** An' Deacon Jones an' Allan Dodd. [Bells cease.

**Uncle J.** Run out and meet them, an' give all a hearty welcome fer Jim's sake.

[BESS, GRACE, and BOB exeunt D. in F.

**Major (outside).** Whoa there! Pile out, all of you, and give three cheers fer Captain Jim Mathews.

[They all cheer. UNCLE JOHN stands L. C. The guests enter laughing and talking, each wrapped up as for winter.

**Uncle J.** (greeting them). Howdy, Deacon! How are ye, Caroline, lookin' spruce as ever, I see.

**Caroline.** Oh, now, Uncle John.

[GRACE and AUNT DEBBY assist them to take off the wraps.

**Uncle J.** Howdy, Allan. How's yer rheumatics?

**Bob.** Hello, Allan!

**Uncle J.** Major, you forgot your tippet. It is a wonder you didn't freeze your ears.

**Major.** If I hadn't been so excited, John, I reckon I would.

**Uncle J.** Come, sit down. Grace, you sit here by me. Caroline, you sit by the Major. Here, Deacon, here by Debby.

[They all sit. UNCLE JOHN and GRACE, C., leaving a vacant chair at the head of the table,

**Caroline.** And is it true that Jim is a captain?

**Bob** (*who with BESSIE is filling the glasses with cider*). Well, you bet your life.

**Major.** He'll be a major next.

**Uncle J.** Come, now let's drink a health to my son. (*They all rise.*) First let us ask our Father above to help all the wounded an' afflicted, all the loved and loving ones who have been made to suffer through this terrible struggle. (*Pause, they all bow their heads.*) And now let us drink to the health of Captain Mathews.

**Grace.** To our Jim.

**Caroline.** Here's to his birthday.

**Major.** May he be a Colonel.

**Bob.** To his good health.

**Bess.** To his sweetheart.

**Aunt D.** May he escape all danger!

**Uncle J.** And come back safe to those who love him!

[*During the last speeches the sound of sleighbells is heard coming nearer and nearer until they seem to stop at the door. They listen intently with their glasses raised. A knock is heard at the door. BOB opens it.*

**Uncle J.** Somebody is coming late, we will wait for them.

**Bob** (*opening door*). Come in!

*A messenger enters with a telegram which he hands to BOB who gives it to UNCLE JOHN.*

**Uncle J.** Grace, you read it. I haven't got my spectacles.

[*GRACE takes telegram, tears it open, reads it to herself, utters a cry and sinks down by table, her face buried in her hands.*

**Uncle J.** Grace, what is it? What does it say? For God's sake, let me know.

**Grace** (*reading telegram*). "Your son has been mortally wounded, come to him at once."

[*UNCLE JOHN looks bewildered at GRACE, then at the others. He tries to speak, the glass slips from his fingers, he utters a low cry and falls. Picture and*

CURTAIN.

## ACT IV.

**Scene.**—*Same as the previous acts.*

AUNT DEBBY *discovered knitting by the fireplace.*

BESSIE *enters from R.*

**Aunt D.** And how is Grace this morning?

**Bess.** A great deal better. She told me that as she felt so well, and the day was so bright, she would get up and come out here.

**Aunt D.** It will do her a heap of good. Poor girl, she has had a pretty hard time of it since we got the news about Jim.

**Bess.** And it is just worry about Jim that keeps her sick. I do hope we will get a letter from Uncle John to-day.

**Aunt D.** The mails are very irregular now, Bess, and since they have moved Jim to the hospital at Washington, your Uncle John can't let us know as often as he did. Bob went to the postoffice nigh an hour ago. I wonder what is keepin' him.

**Bess.** Well, if he don't bring back a letter, I'll write one myself. Grace can't live on hope always.

**Aunt D.** I'll make her up a good dose of sage tea and dandelion roots; that does a power of good in the spring.

**Bess.** I don't believe they will touch her case, Aunt Debby. She needs a remedy named "Jim." I am goin' to make her some toast and a cup of tea now, an' when she comes out here, you just try to cheer her up all you can.

**Aunt D.** I will, Bessie.

**Bess.** And let her talk about Jim just as much as she wants to. [Exit BESSIE at L.]

**Aunt D.** I don't know of a subject that could come nigher to the hearts of any of us. Poor Grace, an' poor Jim.

*[She wipes her eyes.]*

**Enter the MAJOR and BOB, D. in F.**

**Bob.** Here we are.

**Major.** Good-morning, Debby!

**Aunt D.** *(rising, and taking his hand).* Well, Major! I am glad to see you!

**Bob.** I thought you'd be, leastwise I told him so. I've been gone a good while, Aunt Debby, but you'll have to lay the blame on the Major. He insisted on coming with me, an' you know how slow he gets over ground with that game leg of his,

**Aunt D.** Now, Bob, I think the Major is real spry. How d'ye feel this morning, Major?

**Major.** Jist like a yearlin' colt, Debby!

**Aunt D.** Any letters, Bob?

**Bob.** Yes, one for you. (*He hands her the letter. She gets her spectacles from the cupboard.*) I met old screw-eyed Tidd at the postoffice, an' he told me he'd be out here to see us to-day. He didn't say it very pleasant, either.

**Aunt D.** I wonder what he wants out here? I haven't seen him in three months. I don't trade in his store any more, an' he hasn't been to church for a power of a time. I'm afraid he's clean backslid. (*Opens the letter.*) It is from your Uncle John.

**Major.** May I hear it, Debby?

**Aunt D.** Of course. You are just like one of the family, Major.

**Major.** Thankee, Debby.

**Bob.** If you'd like to be any closer related, Major, there is a chance for you.

**Aunt D.** You be quiet now, Bob.

**Bob.** I'm mum. Go on with the letter.

**Aunt D.** (*reads.*) "I don't know when I will be able to bring Jimmy home, for the doctors have decided that to-morrow he will have to undergo a dangerous operation which may result in his death. He is very low at present, and I fear for the worst, but will let you know of any change at once. Will write again to-morrow."

**Major.** Poor John, he is worried nigh to death.

**Bob.** Is that all, Aunt Debby?

**Aunt D.** Every word. (*She drops the letter and begins to cry.*) Oh, why did we let Jim go away. I know that we will never see him again.

**Major.** Poor Debby! [*He tries to comfort her.*

**Bob** (*picks up the letter*). Why, this letter was written nearly three weeks ago.

**Major.** Three weeks ago!

**Bob.** Yes. It has been delayed somewhere.

**Aunt D.** An' Jim may be dead by this time. Oh, what will I do? [*Sits at R. and weeps.*

**Bob.** Don't screech for one thing. Do you want Grace to hear you?

**Major.** Yes, we must keep this news from her. Besides, if Jim was dead John would be home by this time. We may get good news on the next train.

**Bob.** And we won't have long to wait.

**Major.** So don't worry, Debby.

**Bob.** Don't talk to her, Major. She wouldn't be happy unless she was miserable.



**Aunt D.** I just know that Jim has passed away. I dreamed of a wedding last night, and that is a sure sign of death.

**Bob.** Did you really dream of a wedding, Aunt Debby?

**Aunt D.** Yes, Bob.

**Bob.** And is it a sure sign?

**Aunt D.** Yes, Bob.

**Bob.** I don't believe it!

*[He wipes his eyes on his coat-sleeve, and goes up to the window.]*

**Enter BESSIE** from L. with a tray of tea and toast.

**Bessie.** Good-morning, father. What is the matter, Aunt Debby? *(She sets the tray upon the table and crosses R. to her.)* Have you got some bad news? Oh, you are all crying! Is Jim dead? Why don't some of you tell me?

*[GRACE calls outside at R.]*

**Grace.** I am coming, Bessie!

**Bess.** She will find it out! It will kill her!

**Bob.** She must not know it. We will all laugh! *(He tries to laugh but ends with a sob.)* Come on, laugh! Take up your knitting, Aunt Debby, just as if nothing had happened. Bess, you tend to your toast. Major, you tell us a funny story!

*[All make a dismal attempt at laughing.]*

**Aunt D.** *(crying).* Oh, Bob, how can I laugh?

**Bob** *(goes to door R. and calls).* Gracie!

**Grace** *(outside).* Yes, Bob!

**Bob.** Come on in, we want to see you. The Major is tellin' us a lot of funny stories, and we are near bustin' with laughin'.

**Enter GRACE** at R.

**Major** *(tenderly taking her hand).* Howdy do, Grace. Feelin' better to-day?

*[BOB places a chair for her at L. She sits.]*

**Grace.** Much better, Major. *(AUNT D. crosses to GRACE and strokes her hair gently.)* Good-morning, Aunt Debby. *(Kisses her.)* How bright you all look. I think we must all feel better because we are going to hear good news of Jim to-day.

*[AUNT D. and BESS wipe their eyes; BOB coughs and goes up to the window; MAJOR examines the things on the mantelpiece.]*

**Major.** I hope that we will, Grace.

**Grace.** I have dressed myself in white, Jim always liked this dress. Now, don't think that I am foolish, Major; but last night I dreamed that Uncle John had brought Jim home to us. Have you been to the postoffice, Bob?

**Bob.** Yes, Grace!

*[He comes down to C.]*

**Grace.** Did you get any letters?

**Bob** (*hesitates*). N-no, Grace. [*He exit quickly D. in F.*]

**Major** (*crosses to GRACE*). Don't fret on that account, little girl, for we may get news on the later train. You see we hardly ever get mail on the early train because—well—and—I guess I will go out an' see what Bob is doin'.

[*He exit D. in F. BESSIE goes up to the window.*]

**Grace.** What is the matter with Bob and the Major?

**Bess.** I guess Bob wanted to get to work, I see him out in the onion-bed pullin' weeds like fury. (*Comes down to GRACE.*) Would you like more tea, Gracie?

**Grace.** No, thank, you, Bessie.

**Bess.** Then I'll take it out in the kitchen. You sit here with Aunt Debby till I come back.

**Grace.** Then we will go down by the spring where the violets grow. I want to pick some, for Jim is so fond of them.

**Bess.** And I know a place that is just blue with flowers. I'll be right back, Grace. You take good care of her, Aunt Debby. [*Exit BESSIE L.*]

**Grace.** I'm an awful lot of trouble to you, Aunt Debby.

**Aunt D.** Not one bit! I don't know what we would do without you. You must promise me to make this your home always.

**Grace.** Yes, Aunt Debby. I don't believe that Jim would want to leave his father, even after we are married.

**Aunt D.** No, Grace. [*Kisses her.*]

**Grace.** You have been so kind to me. I never knew my own father and mother, they died when I was so very young; when I came here to teach the school, I was just out of school myself, and had always lived among strangers; but I am sure that my own father could not have been dearer to me than Uncle John, and no mother could do more for me than you have done.

**Aunt D.** It is all because we love you, Grace.

**Grace.** Then I met Jim and he—loved me too. I don't believe I ever knew how much I cared for him until he went away. I think I should have died, if he had died, but I know that he will be back to me soon; then how happy we will be.

**Aunt D.** Yes, Grace dear. [*Sighs.*]

**Grace** (*rises and goes up to the window*). How bright it is to-day; the first real warm day of sunshine we have had.

**Aunt D.** Yes, the spring was late this year.

**Grace.** Just a year ago to-day Jim went away. Oh, Aunt Debby, what if he should come back to-day—this very day.

**Aunt D.** It seems almost too good to hope for, Grace.

**Grace.** Nothing is too good to hope for, Aunt Debby.

**Enter BESSIE at L.**

**Bess.** I am ready, Grace. I've brought your hat and shawl. The day is just glorious.

**Grace.** We will pick a bunch of violets for Jim's room, and one for Uncle John's, for they might come back to-day, Bess.

**Bess** (*sadly*). Yes, Grace.

**Grace.** I am ready, now. Come on, Bessie.

**Aunt D.** Take good care of her, Bessie. Keep your shawl close about you and don't tire yourself out.

**Grace.** I won't, I am going to try and get the roses back into my cheeks, so that Jim won't miss them. Good-bye, Aunt Debby.

[**Exit GRACE and BESSIE, D. in F.**

**Aunt D.** Poor girl, an' Jim may be dead. Oh, what suffering this struggle has brought to every woman both in the north and south. The men have the *glory*, but we women have the *pain*.

[*Takes up her knitting and sits at R.*

**Enter BOB at R.**

**Bob.** Has Grace gone?

**Aunt D.** Yes, Bob.

**Bob** (*comes down L. to her.*). Now, Aunt Debby, don't worry any more than you can help. I know that I sometimes near torment the life out of you, but it is not because I don't like you, it is just my pure cussedness. I'm a-goin' to ask you to forgive me, Aunt Debby, an' I'm goin' to promise to try an' do better.

**Aunt D.** Bob, I never did hold any malice towards you, an' as soon as you've done some aggravatin' thing, I forgive you. I've been real mean an' hateful myself, sometimes, an' I expect, tryin'?

**Bob.** No, Aunt Debby, you are just the next thing to an angel, and I'm going to give you a good hug.

[*He embraces her.*

**Aunt D.** Oh, Bob Mathews, you near took the breath out of me.

**Bob.** Aunt Debby, while Uncle John is away, I am the man of the house. From the way Deacon Tidd looked at me when he said he was coming out here, I reckoned he means to do something unpleasant.

**Aunt D.** What could he do, Bob?

**Bob.** I don't know; but just before Jim went away—(**AUNT DEBBY** *wipes her eyes*)—Deacon Tidd was here, an' he an' grandpa had some kind of a row. I don't know what it was about, but I kind of guess his comin' out here to-day has *some-thing* to do with that.

**Aunt D.** What could it be?

**Bob.** I don't know, an' I don't know as I'd tell you if I did know. Now if Deacon Tidd acts mean to-day, you just call me, and—I'll fire him out.

**Aunt D.** Why, Bob!

**Bob.** Yes, an' John Henry, too, if he comes along.

**Aunt D.** Now, Bob, don't you get into any quarrel with Deacon Tidd!

**Bob.** Not unless he tries to do any funny business. The Major thinks that something is in the wind, an' he is going to stay until it is all over. When I came in, I saw Deacon Tidd driving up the lane, so we won't be long findin' out what he wants. (*Goes up to door R.*) Now you just let him say his say,—*then call on me!* [Exit BOB, R.

**Aunt D.** Well, if he's comin' I'd better put on a clean apron. The Deacon was always peculiar, but I don't see what he can have against us. We don't owe him anything! (DEACON TIDD *knocks at D. in F.*, AUNT DEBBY *opens it.* The DEACON *enters*). Good-morning, Deacon!

**Deacon.** Good-morning!

**Aunt D.** Fine weather we are havin'. Sit down, an' let me take your hat. [DEACON *sits*.

**Deacon.** No, thank you, I can hold it where it is.

**Aunt D.** How's all your folks?

**Deacon.** Fair. How's yourn?

**Aunt D.** Pretty well. Grace, she is right peart this mornin'. She's gone out for a walk.

**Deacon.** It does seem to me as though you always had a power of people hangin' around. It must take an awful sight of money to feed so many.

**Aunt D.** I guess we don't begrudge it. John always thinks of them as his own children.

**Deacon.** Is John to home yet?

**Aunt D.** No, he ain't come back.

**Deacon.** When do you expect him?

**Aunt D.** We ain't heard.

**Deacon.** Well, he'd better come home an' tend to business.

**Aunt D.** And leave Jim alone, sick, and maybe nigh unto death, among strangers? That ain't the kind of a father John Mathews is.

**Deacon.** Well, I've got a little business to settle with him, and as he ain't here, I guess you are the one to talk to.

**Aunt D.** What is it, Deacon?

**Deacon.** A year ago to-day, John gave me a mortgage on this land. The time is up to-day. I suppose he left you the money to settle it.

**Aunt D.** A mortgage! Why, Deacon Tidd, what are you talkin' about?

**Deacon.** Business! Here are the papers. You can see them yourself.

**Aunt D.** John mortgage his home! The place where Jim was born, an' where his wife died and lies buried!

**Deacon.** Yes, and the money is due to-day. Can you settle it?

**Aunt D.** I don't know anything about this, Deacon.

**Deacon.** Well, I do. Business is business, an' if the mortgage an' interest are not paid, you'll have to go, that's all. If I've got to take the land, I want it in time to put in the spring crops.

**Aunt D.** It's in, every seed! Bob Mathews tended to that.

**Deacon.** Then maybe I can give John Henry Tidd a chance to take care of it.

**Aunt D.** Deacon Tidd, I just dare you to——

**Deacon.** There is no use gettin' mad, Debby. I've got the law on my side, an' I know what I'm talkin' about.

**Aunt D.** (*rises*). Well, I just dare you to try and put me off this place.

**Deacon.** I can do it! Every kith an kin of ye!

**Aunt D.** And I can put you off. You don't own this farm yet, and this day ain't over yet, and at least till it is, I am the boss. (*She goes to door in flat and opens it.*) Now, you git!

**Deacon** (*rises*). Debby, don't you dare to threaten me!

**Aunt D.** An' don't you dare to threaten me, or I'll take the broom to you. Don't fancy that I am alone and unprotected. (*Calls at door R.*) Major! Bob! Come here!

**Deacon.** Now don't let us have any fuss. I don't want to have no fuss.

**Enter MAJOR and BOB, R.**

**Aunt D.** (*C*). Now, I want you two to witness that I ask that man there to leave peaceably and quietly. If he don't go, I'll take this broom to him! [*She takes up the broom.*]

**Deacon.** And I want both of you to witness that she threatened me.

**Aunt D.** You go before I count five! *One!*

**Deacon.** You'll regret this!

**Aunt D.** *Two!*

**Bob.** Count faster, Aunt Debby!

**Aunt D.** *Three!*

**Major.** I guess you'd better go, Deacon. I think she means business.

**Aunt D.** *Four!*

**Deacon.** I'll be back with the sheriff! I'll see if a man can be treated like this on his own grounds!

**Aunt D.** *Five!* [*She starts for the DEACON, who hurriedly exit D. in F.*]

**Bob.** Why didn't you whack him one !

**Aunt D.** Bob, you mind your own business. (*She sinks in chair L., and bursts into tears.*) Oh, Major ! Major !

**Major.** What in the world is the matter, Debby !

**Aunt D.** Oh, this is too much !

**Bob.** What did he say, Aunt Debby ?

**Aunt D.** You go out and let me talk to the Major.

**Bob.** But, Aunt Debby—

**Aunt D.** Go on, Bob, or I'll count five for you !

**Bob.** Well, I don't think it's right, but I'll go.

[*Exit BOB D. in F.*]

**Major.** Now, Debby, what is this all about ?

**Aunt D.** Major, that Deacon Tidd has gone and got a mortgage on this farm for five hundred dollars.

**Major.** You don't say !

**Aunt D.** I do say ! I saw it ! It is due to-day, and John drew every cent of money from the bank when he went to Jimmy. Oh, I don't know what to do.

**Major.** And I haven't got that much money in the world, or you could have it in a minute.

**Aunt D.** He threatens to turn us out to-day.

**Major.** I don't believe he can do that, Debby.

**Aunt D.** What will we do ? (*Rises.*) John's heart is just bound up in this home. Oh, I am so miserable.

**Major** (*holding out his arms*). Cry it out here, Debby ! (*Embraces her.*) I've got my place left. It ain't worth much, but whatever I've got, you may share—every one of you.

**Aunt D.** Why, Major, what would people say ?

**Major.** What could they say, when you were—(*gasps*)—my wife !

**Aunt D.** Your wife ? Oh, Major !

[*Hides her face bashfully.*]

**Major.** There now, I've said it, and I've been wantin' to say it for nigh onto five years. Will you have me, Debby ?

**Aunt D.** And I've been wantin' you to say it for nigh onto five years. Yes, I'll have you, Major !

**Major.** There now !

[*Kisses her.*]

CAROLINE ANTWERP enters D. in F.

**Caroline.** Ahem !

[*Turns her back on them.*]

**Major** (*embarrassed*). Howdy, Caroline !

**Aunt D.** Come right in, Caroline.

**Caroline** (*snappishly*). I hope I don't intrude ?

**Aunt D.** Oh, no. Does she, Major ?

**Major.** Not at all, Debby.

**Caroline.** I didn't know, but as I came in—

**Major.** You were mistaken, Caroline.

**Caroline.** Well, maybe I was, but I don't think so.

**Major** (*going up to D. in F.*). I guess I'll go out to the barn. You'll excuse me, Caroline?

**Caroline.** Oh, I can, if Debby can.

**Aunt D.** Oh, I guess I can.

[**Exit** MAJOR, D. in F.]

**Caroline.** Well, Deborah Mathews!

**Aunt D.** Well, Caroline?

**Caroline.** Debby, I'm ashamed of you.

**Aunt D.** What do you mean, Caroline Antwerp?

**Caroline.** What did I see when I came in?

**Aunt D.** You ought to know better than me.

**Caroline.** Debby Mathews, I saw you kiss him.

**Aunt D.** Well, an' what if I did?

**Caroline.** It was bold and unmaidenly of you.

**Aunt D.** But it would be all right, I suppose, if he had kissed you. For my part, I don't see anything wrong in a woman kissin' the man she is going to marry.

**Caroline.** What!

**Aunt D.** (*calmly*). Don't faint, Caroline.

**Caroline** (*spitefully*). So you've caught him at last after trying all these years.

**Aunt D.** Yes, Caroline, and after all these years of tryin' you have failed to catch him.

**Caroline.** Do you mean to say——

**Aunt D.** Them as the shoe pinches can wear it.

**Caroline.** Well, all I've got to say is that you'll repent your regain.

**Aunt D.** Maybe I will, but that is my lookout.

**Caroline.** And you ought to be ashamed to accept a proposal the very day your nephew lies dead.

**Aunt D.** Jim, dead!

**Caroline.** Yes, dead!

**Aunt D.** Caroline, where did you hear that?

**Caroline.** I saw it in the "Putnam Herald." (*She takes a newspaper from her reticule.*) Here it is. (*Reads.*) The following is the list of dead this morning in the Military Hospital at Washington. See here is his name the third on the list. Captain James Mathews of—— (*AUNT DEBBY falls in chair R.*). Don't faint, Debby.

[*Throws her paper on table R., and takes AUNT DEBBY'S arm.*]

**Aunt D.** Dead—our Jim! Oh, how shall I ever bear it? How can I tell Grace?

**Caroline.** Forgive me, Debby, I thought you knew of it. I know that I am cranky and mean, but I never would a' done this.

**Enter** BOB, D. *in F.*

**Bob.** It's about time for the train, Aunt Debby. I'm goin' to drive down and see if there is any mail.

**Aunt D.** It is of no use, Bob. Jim is dead.

**Bob.** Who told you that?

**Caroline.** I read it in the paper.

**Bob.** I don't believe it! I won't believe it. I won't believe anything until we hear from Uncle John. I'm going for the mail!

**Caroline.** May I ride back to town with you, Bob?

**Bob.** If you are not afraid to ride fast, for I'm going to drive like — blazes. Things have got pretty well mixed up here, and some one has got to straighten 'em out.

[**Exit** BOB and CAROLINE, D. *in F.*

**Aunt D.** Jim dead! How will I ever tell Grace. Oh, Merciful Father, how could you take our little Jim from us?

**Enter** GRACE, D. *in F.*

**Grace.** Aunt Debby, see what a big bunch of violets I found. The sunshine has brought new life to me. Jim won't miss my rosy cheeks after all.

**Aunt D.** No, Grace. [*Helps GRACE off with her hat and shawl.*

**Grace** (*sits in chair by the table*). I believe that I am just a bit tired after all. Bessie and I were down by the spring where Jim first told me—that he cared for me. I could shut my eyes and almost fancy I heard him say again—"I—love—you." (*Sighs.*) Has Bob gone for the mail?

**Aunt D.** No, Grace dear.

**Grace.** We will surely get some word to-day. Some word that will make us all very happy.

**Aunt D.** But if it should be bad news, Grace?

**Grace.** It won't be, Aunt Debby. I am sure of it.

**Aunt D.** (*aside*). Oh, I can't tell her, I can't. (*Aloud.*) I'll get a vase for your flowers, Grace. Sit here, dear, until I come back. (*Goes to door R.*) Poor girl, poor girl! [**Exit at R.**

**Grace.** I cannot think that bad news will come to-day. (*Takes up the flowers.*) Violets! How Jim does love them; he likes to see me wear them too. I will pin a bunch here at my throat; then if he should come back to-day— (*Sees paper on the table.*) Here is a newspaper, the first I have seen in weeks. (*Takes it up.*) This will bring sorrow to more than one loving heart. What is this? "List of dead and wounded." What a world of misery lies in those few words. "Caleb Jones, Private Frederick Lee." My God! What is this? "Captain James Mathews, of—— That is Jim's name, here among the dead!



No, no! it is not true! I cannot believe it! (*Rises.*) Aunt Debby! Bessie! No! I won't believe it! [*Falls.*]

**Enter BESSIE D. in F.**

**Bess.** Did you call, Grace? (*Sees her.*) Grace, what is the matter? Grace, look at me! Speak to me! Aunt Debby, come quick, Grace is dead!

**Enter MAJOR and DEBBY at R.**

**Major.** What is the matter, Bessie?

**Aunt D.** (*kneels by GRACE and takes the paper from her hand.*) She has learned the truth!

**Bess.** The truth?

**Aunt D.** Jim is dead!

[*They place GRACE in the chair R., a knock at the door is heard.*]

**Bess.** Who is there?

**JIM enters D. in F., he is very pale, the sleeve of his right arm is empty and pinned on his breast.**

**Jim.** Aunt Debby, don't you know me?

**Aunt D.** Is it Jim? [*With a cry of joy.*]

**Major.** Hush! A sudden joy can kill, they say.

**oim.** What do you mean?

**Major** (*points to chair*). Grace is there!

**Jim** (*seeing her*). Grace! [*Kneels by the chair.*]

**Grace** (*reviving*). And he will not come back to me.

**Jim.** What does she mean?

**Major.** We heard that you were dead. Bessie, tell her that Jim is here, then leave them together.

[*JIM goes up stage.* **AUNT D. and MAJOR exeunt R.**]

**Grace** (*to BESS who kneels, beside her*). I thought I heard his voice—but no, they said that he is dead.

**Bess.** Grace, dear Grace, suppose the news was not true!

**Grace.** Not true?

**Bess.** That Jim would come back to-day!

**Grace.** That Jim would come back to me?

**Bess.** That he is here!

[**BESSIE exit R.**]

**Grace.** Here!

[*She rises.*]

**Jim** (*comes quickly down and clasps her in his arms*). Grace, I am here!

**Grace.** Jim! Is it really you? Oh, my dear love, they told me that you were dead.

**Jim.** No, I am here. Safe with you at last. All here but— [*He points to his empty sleeve.*]

**Grace.** Oh, my poor boy! My poor Jim!

**Enter** UNCLE J. and BOB, D. in F.

**Uncle J.** Grace, I brought him back to you.

**Grace.** Father! [*She kisses him.*]

**Enter from R.,** MAJOR, AUNT D. and BESS.

**Major.** Howdy do, John!

**Uncle J.** Howdy do, Major. [*They shake hands warmly.*]

**Bob.** Bessie, give me a kiss. I'm full of joy to the explodin' point. [*She kisses him.*]

**Major.** Debby, do likewise.

**Aunt D.** Oh, Major! [*They embrace.*]

**Major.** Bess, here is your new mother!

**Bess.** New? She's been a real mother to me ever since I can remember.

**BILL TIDD enters** D. in F.

**Bill.** May I come in?

**Jim.** It's Bill. Come in, Bill.

**Aunt D.** Well, Bill Tidd, of all people. Well, I am powerful glad to see you! [*Shakes his hands warmly.*]

**Jim.** Grace, this is my friend. He lay almost dying, in the cot next to mine, but father recognized him——

**Bill.** And saved my worthless life.

**Uncle J.** Not worthless, Bill.

**Bill.** Not if anything I can do in the future will atone for my past.

**Enter** DEACON TIDD and JOHN HENRY D. in F.

**Deacon** (*as he enters*). Now, Debby Mathews, I'll show you what the law can do.

**Uncle J.** Howdy, Deacon! On hand prompt, I see.

**Bill.** Father! [*Starts toward him.*]

**Deacon.** You here, you thief!

**Grace.** Deacon!

**Uncle J.** Don't call hard names, Deacon. Bill has been nigh to the point of death and has begun life anew.

**Deacon.** Nigh to death?

**Bill.** Yes, father.

**John H.** Bill, father called you a thief just now; but I never told on you, I never said a word. [*BILL takes his hand.*]

**Bill.** But I have. Father, I took that money, not Jim.

**Deacon.** You!

**Bill.** Yes. I do not ask you to forgive me, until I prove to you that I mean to live as a man should. Give me that paper.

[*He takes the mortgage paper from the DEACON'S hands and tears it into bits.*]

**Deacon.** How dare you?

**Bill.** That is my first step towards the better life I mean to lead—one of honesty. I will pay you the money back, every penny of it, and there is my hand.

**Deacon.** And when you have paid it, I will give you my hand, and not before. [**Exeunt** DEACON and JOHN H., D. in F.]

**Uncle J.** Here is mine now.

**Major.** And mine!

**Jim.** And mine! It is the left one, Bill, but I gave my right to my country.

**Grace.** My poor Jim.

**Uncle J.** No, Grace. Others have given their lives without a murmur. We should thank the Father of us all for bringing back to us——

**Grace.** Our Jim!

CURTAIN.



## NEW PLAYS.

---

# A RIVAL BY REQUEST.

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.

By B. L. C. GRIFFITH.

Author of "A BACHELOR'S DIVORCE."

Six male and five female characters. Costumes, modern and appropriate; scenery, two interiors. This is a comedy with an exceptionally well-constructed and interesting plot, abundant incident, and an unusual variety of character and humor. Its misunderstandings are ingenious and unforced and extremely laughable, and Pierson's confusion of Lord Anthony McMullin and Alexander Muggins, a source of unfailing mirth. In its well-marked contrasts and uniformly strong character it offers a peculiarly advantageous vehicle for the talent of a good amateur club. Plays two hours and a half without a dull moment. The dialogue is particularly rapid and brilliant.

Price . . . . 15 cents.

### Synopsis.

ACT I. — Pierson and the cornet. Getting out of an engagement. The Briggs family. Smythe's English valet. On the move. Muggins. The lord or the lackey. Briggs and the bargain counter. Lord McMullin. A sad mistake. Love at first sight. The new boarders. The plot thickens. A crisis. Engaged to two women at once. Bad for Pierson.

ACT II. — Cutting the knot. A useless servant. A lord for a lover. More misunderstandings. Briggs' nightmare. Nobody's fool. The ladies combine. Husbands on strike. Defiance. Briggs and the ballet. A three-cornered row. Pierson explains. The two McMullins. Revelations. A broken engagement. Another. Worse for Pierson.

ACT III. — Pierson in a plight. The two B's on a bat. "It's our wives' fault." An artful stratagem. The telegram. A plot that didn't work. Fixing it up. Muggins on thin ice. The two fiancées. Smythe's return. McMullin's restoration to the nobility. Worst for Pierson. Explanations. A show of hands. Pairing off. Muggins goes back to private life. The band plays "Annie Laurie."

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# THE REVOLVING WEDGE.

A FOOTBALL ROMANCE IN ONE ACT.

By THORNTON M. WARE and GEORGE P. BAKER.

Five male and three female characters. Costumes and scenery very simple. A capital farce, particularly adapted for Thanksgiving Day performances. Its excellent and original plot cleverly utilizes the universal mania for football and builds up from this foundation an admirable progression of incidents leading to a most laughable conclusion. Its method will at once suggest that of the popular "Obstinate Family," and it can be safely recommended to any one who has liked that piece. Plays nearly an hour.

Price . . . . 15 cents.

## NEW PLAYS.

# THE LIMIT OF THE LAW.

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

By JUSTIN ADAMS,

Author of "TRISS," "THE RAG-PICKER'S CHILD," "AT THE PICKET LINE," ETC.

Seven male and five female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors and two exteriors — not at all difficult. This is a piece with a strong melodramatic interest and plenty of comedy. Ike Toot, a base-bail crank, Jimmy Keyes, a "tough," Cristy Dunlap, a sentimental spinster, and Biddy, an importation, constitute a great low-comedy team. Richard Dunlap and Teresa are strong "heavy" characters; Robert Dunlap and Beatrice, sympathetic leads, and Trissy an admirable juvenile. The story of this piece is ingenious and absorbing, and the interest well sustained. The third act is especially strong, alike in interest, sympathy and humor, and presents a decided scenic novelty, not at all difficult.

Price . . . . 15 cents.

### Synopsis.

ACT I. — Biddy's ankles. Bob's decision. A family row. Love and lawyers. "A three-bagger." Father and son. "When I was a boy." Flesh and blood. "An insult to my dead mother." Richard the righteous. A spot on the son. The deserted wife. "It is true, for I can witness it."

ACT II. — Cristy and Emanuel. "Take it straight." Miss Bidelia Mahoney. The check for ten thousand. Playing with fire. An appeal. Bob leaves the firm. Ike's adventure. The lobster salad. The false son. "Caught at last." A woman in the case. Off to Montreal. The wonderful telephone. The photograph. The discovery. The saint a devil. Ruined. "You are my father still."

ACT III. — A plot. Trissy and Santa Claus. The good Samaritan. "Peace on earth and good will toward men." The shadow on the blind. Hanging up the stocking. Asa in a new rôle. A change of heart. The marriage certificate. Jimmy Keyes and the turkey. The robbery. "One strike — out." Saved. "A true wife and mother in the sight of God and man."

ACT IV. — Montreal. A double play. Bob and Teresa. The "diamond." A clue. A pious fraud. Bagging the cat. "I love you." Richard again. "Who is that man?" Retribution. "My God! It is Bob."

ACT V. — Biddy and the waterfall. "Striking a pudding." Asa as a "hoss." Beatrice and Bob. Ike does detective work. A misunderstanding. "I am his promised wife." The net closes. "Will Ike never come?" Betrayed. The trap sprung. "Behind prison bars."

# UNDER PROTEST.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

By JEANNE RAYMOND BIDWELL.

Two male and two female characters. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. This is practically a monologue for Ballard, a very absent-minded personage who carries most of the interest of the play, though Louise, his daughter, has a certain share. With a good light comedian as Ballard, the piece is extravagantly funny. Very simple to get up, perfectly refined and universal in the appeal of its humor. Plays twenty-five minutes.

Price . . . . 15 cents.

## NEW PLAYS.

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# The Wrecker's Daughter.

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

By B. F. MOORE,

Author of "CAPTAIN JACK," "THE IRISH AGENT," ETC.

Five male and two female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interiors. A very simple and effective domestic melodrama, its scenes laid on the coast of Maine. All the characters are good and all of nearly equal prominence; that of Pat Murphy being a particularly strong Irish low-comedy part. This piece is especially adapted for the use of younger amateurs who want something strong with plenty of chance to act. Situations thrilling. Not a parlor play or at all suited to people in search of a quiet piece.

Price . . . . 15 cents.

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### Synopsis.

ACT I.—The child of the wreck. A Pat reply. The revenue cutter. Pat's sea-legs. Essie's secret. "Let her choose between us." The detective. "A piece of nice fat pork." *The Spy!* "Don't move or I'll fire!" AT BAY.

ACT II.—Bill's visitor. "The only bright spot in my life." A clue. Identified. "I want no reward for doing my duty." An intruder. Pat and Lucy. Jealousy. The wrecker. "For the last time." A double traitor. The false light. Just in time. SAVED!

ACT III.—The trial. Essie decides. "I will remain with the only father I have ever known." The betrayal. Revenged. Phil and Essie. Pat's proposal. The license. "A quiet little nap." THE END OF ALL!

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# LOVE IN A LIGHTHOUSE.

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

By ROSEMARY BAUM,

Author of "THAT BOX OF CIGARETTES."

Three male and three female characters. Costumes and scenery easy. This is a very pretty and delicately humorous play by the author of the popular "That Box of Cigarettes," by which its general character can be judged. The ladies' parts are especially strong.—Polly, the "bound" girl, and Mrs. Capel Robinson, a local Mrs. Malaprop, affording excellent comedy. Its story is very original and humorous and its dialogue particularly good. A capital play for hall or parlor.

Price . . . . 15 cents.

## NEW PLAYS.

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# The Flying Wedge.

A FOOTBALL FARCE IN ONE ACT.

By GRACE LIVINGSTON FURNISS.

Author of "A BOX OF MONKEYS," "SECOND FLOOR SPOOPENDYKE," "THE CORNER-LOT CHORUS," etc.

Three male and five female characters. Scene, an interior. Costumes, modern. A bright and vivacious piece in Miss Furniss's very best vein. An overwhelming success in its original Empire Theatre production, and a favorite with amateur clubs in the past two seasons, during which it has been offered as a manuscript piece under royalty. We have much pleasure in offering this popular farce for sale as a book, upon the ordinary terms, and in announcing that after Jan. 1, 1898, it may be played without payment of royalty. It is confidently recommended to young people as an amusing, up-to-date piece, full of fun, and yet incapable of giving offence to the most scrupulous taste. This, and the circumstance that it offers parts for more ladies than gentlemen, make its publication an apt answer to a very large and urgent demand for just such a play. It plays about forty-five minutes.

Price . . . . . 25 Cents.

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# A Dead Heat.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

Five female characters. Scene, an interior. Costumes, modern. A capital little play for ladies, affording four well-contrasted parts of nearly equal value and strength. Described by a professional auditor of its first performance as "the best play for all women that I ever saw." This, too, was one of the notable productions of the late Nelson Wheatcroft, at his successful Empire Theatre Dramatic School, New York, and is a welcome addition to our large, but never large enough, list of plays for female characters. "A Dead Heat" can be played after Jan. 1, 1898, without payment of royalty.

Price . . . . . 15 Cents.

## THE MAGISTRATE.

A Farce in Three Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Twelve male, four female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, all

interior. The merits of this excellent and amusing piece, one of the most popular of its author's plays, are well attested by long and repeated runs in the principal American theatres. It is of the highest class of dramatic writing, and is uproariously funny, and at the same time unexceptionable in tone. Its entire suitability for amateur performance has been shown by hundreds of such productions from manuscript during the past three years. Plays two hours and a half. (1892.)

## THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH.

A Drama in Four Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Eight male and five female characters; scenery, all interiors. This is a "problem" play continuing the series to which "The Profligate" and "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray"

belong, and while strongly dramatic, and intensely interesting is not suited for amateur performance. It is recommended for Reading Clubs. (1895.)

## THE PROFLIGATE.

A Play in Four Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Seven male and five female characters. Scenery, three interiors, rather elaborate;

costumes, modern. This is a piece of serious interest, powerfully dramatic in movement, and tragic in its event. An admirable play, but not suited for amateur performance. (1892.)

## THE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

A Farce in Three Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Nine male, seven female characters. Costumes, modern;

scenery, three interiors, easily arranged. This ingenious and laughable farce was played by Miss Rosina Vokes during her last season in America with great success. Its plot is amusing, its action rapid and full of incident, its dialogue brilliant, and its scheme of character especially rich in quaint and humorous types. The Hon. Vere Queckett and Peggy are especially strong. The piece is in all respects suitable for amateurs. (1894.)

## THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY.

A Play in Four Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Eight male and five female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. This well-known and powerful

play is not well suited for amateur performance. It is offered to Mr. Pinero's admirers among the reading public in answer to the demand which its wide discussion as an acted play has created. (1894.)

Also in Cloth, \$1.00.

## SWEET LAVENDER.

A Comedy in Three Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Seven male and four female characters. Scene, a single interior, the

same for all three acts; costumes, modern and fashionable. This well known and popular piece is admirably suited to amateur players, by whom it has been often given during the last few years. Its story is strongly sympathetic, and its comedy interest abundant and strong. (1893.)

## THE TIMES.

A Comedy in Four Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Six male and seven female characters. Scene, a single elegant interior; costumes, modern and fashionable. An

entertaining piece, of strong dramatic interest and admirable satirical humor. (1892.)

## THE WEAKER SEX.

A Comedy in Three Acts. By ARTHUR W. PINERO. Eight male and eight female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery,

two interiors, not difficult. This very amusing comedy was a popular feature of the repertoire of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal in this country. It presents a plot of strong dramatic interest, and its incidental satire of "Woman's Rights" employs some admirably humorous characters, and inspires many very clever lines. Its leading characters are unusually even in strength and prominence, which makes it a very satisfactory piece for amateurs. (1894.)



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**Queen Flora's Day Dream.** An Operetta for Children. Six speaking parts and chorus.

**The Boating Party.** A Musical Sketch for Little Children. Thirty boys and girls.

**Six Little Grandmas.** A Musical Pantomime for very Little Children. Six very little girls.

**Jimmy Crow.** A Recitation for a Little Girl.

**A House in the Moon.** A Recitation for a Child.







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